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THE INSTITUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS
MOVEMENT

The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

In seven volumes

Introduction by Academician
B.N. PONOMAREV

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The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

Volume 5

THE BUILDER
OF SOCIALISM AND FIGHTER
AGAINST FASCISM



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В СЕМИ ТОМАХ
Том пятый
СОЗИДАТЕЛЬ СОЦИАЛИЗМА, БОРЕЦ ПРОТИВ ФАШИЗМА
На английском языке

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THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

PROBLEMS OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

VOLUME 5

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The book analyses the problems of the international labour and communist movement in 1924-1925. Attention is given chiefly to the constructive activity of the Soviet working class which has built the world's first socialist state, to the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the capitalist states and to the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries. The book shows the role played by the international proletariat as a leader of all forces of democracy and social progress in the liberation struggle against fascism.

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INTRODUCTION

After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution the struggle for socialism became an essential part of the active struggle of the international labour movement. The proletariat of Russia, which had asserted and upheld its political power, was successfully building the first socialist society the world had ever known. The revolutionary vanguard of the working class—the international communist movement—taking its inspiration from the principles of Leninism, was growing from strength to strength: a theoretical analysis of the new conditions for the struggle between the two worlds of capitalism and socialism was being put forward and the activities of the movement were being reorganised, in view of the inevitability of a long struggle against capitalism that lay ahead.

The authors of this fifth volume have done their best to provide a thorough and far-reaching analysis of the nature and implications of the victory scored by the working class in their historic revolutionary mission to transform the world at that particular stage in their march forward. Naturally, attention has been focused on its major historical achievements in the two decades under consideration. First, the working class of the USSR in this period, as it led the whole Soviet people forward, *built the world's first socialist society*, thereby demonstrating the feasibility and viability of the constructive task of the socialist revolution. Second, the working class, as represented first and foremost by the state which the victory of socialism had brought into being, *made a crucial contribution to saving civilisation from the most monstrous phenomenon to emerge from the old world—fascism*.

The place and role of the working class in world social development are examined in relation to these two historic achievements.

The *first part of the volume* treats the role of the working class in

socialist construction in the USSR (1924-1937) and its great feat in charting the path for this new stage of historical development.

The unique achievements of the USSR during the period of the first five-year plans made a great impact on men's minds. The new relations of production became firmly established in the course of socialist industrialisation and the transformation of the country's agriculture. The productive forces ceased to be a means of oppressing people. A political system took shape in which the committed effort of the working people provided the source and basis for an unprecedented phenomenon—a planned economy. State coercion receded, with state functions of a creative, organisational and educational nature being moved in the foreground. The material basis for genuine equality and freedom with regard to the economy, politics, cultural activities and relations between different nations and nationalities and between social groups was growing apace.

As a result of the cultural revolution the many millions of the working masses became actively involved in the process of mankind's historical development. The elimination of illiteracy, the striking rise in the educational level of the whole people at an unprecedented speed, the flowering of scientific research, literature and art, impressive technological advance—these were the main fruits of new, socialist culture. A radical reshaping of men's consciousness was achieved, men and women equipped to carry forward a new, higher civilisation were emerging onto the historical arena.

The whole way of life in the Land of Soviets was transformed at an amazing speed. Class antagonism and enmity between peoples disappeared, socialist nations and nationalities emerged, new relationships between individuals and groups began to rise. Voluntary cooperation and unselfish mutual assistance became the distinguishing characteristics of social relations right across the territory of the enormous state.

All these factors, in particular the elimination of exploitation, unemployment and economic crises, the introduction of new social legislation, the management of the economy in the interests of the whole of society, the enthusiasm and the ideological purposefulness of those building that society, enhanced the attractive power of socialism and created a completely new atmosphere for the class confrontation in the non-socialist world.

Turning socialism from an ideal to reality was at that period the most significant achievement of the world revolutionary process, and this step provided the crucial guarantee that this process would not be turned back and ensured that this process would continue to make advances.

This meant that the class battles of the working class, discussed in the *second part of this volume*, took place in a radically changed

situation under the impact of the fundamental contradiction of the age—that between the world of capitalism and that of socialism—which had now assumed a clearly defined shape.

The bourgeoisie after beating back the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat achieved temporary stabilisation of its supremacy. Shifting its main efforts from an all-out attack against all workers' parties to the tactics of splitting the labour movement, the bourgeoisie directed its main attack against the communist movement. At the same time more energy was devoted to collaboration with the social democratic leaders so as to use their movement to hold back the revolutionary processes.

The Communists' all-important and most pressing task was to consolidate their parties by all the means at their disposal, to extend their influence among the masses in the course of the struggle for the unification of the working class and to win over other democratic forces to its side.

Some advances were made towards the achievement of this goal. However, when the world economy was shaken by a crisis and there was a very real threat of fascism just round the corner, the crucial minimum of working-class influence on the course of events in the capitalist world was not achieved. This was also a period which saw some mistakes and incorrect or misdirected political guidelines.

It was the working class and none other that bore the main brunt of the sacrifice involved in the defence of the human race against a new, unprecedented threat. Against the background of the profound crisis affecting the bourgeois-democratic institutions the line adopted by the Communists calling for the setting-up of a mass-scale anti-fascist movement represented the only path promising success in efforts to withstand the onslaught of the fascist aggressors.

For the most part the Communists succeeded in involving the progressive sections of the working people in the active anti-fascist struggle within the framework of the Popular Front. But social democratic parties and also left-bourgeois political forces were seen to be irresolute and inconsistent with regard to major issues. This held back the advance of the mass anti-fascist movement, undermined the Popular Fronts and was to prove one of the reasons behind their defeat. Nevertheless it was precisely these Popular Fronts which dealt the first blows against fascism and charted the main course for anti-fascist policies used to unite all democratic forces subsequently.

The *third part of this volume* analyses the rise of the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The working class in the countries concerned had, on the one hand, to emerge from the petty-bourgeois masses as an independent political force, and on the other, to cooperate with the national bourgeoisie in the struggle against colonialism. The most important achievement of

the working class in Asia and Africa in those years was its organisational formation, reflected in the emergence and development of communist parties. This factor obliged the national bourgeoisie to adopt a more resolute stand against imperialism. It was precisely at this period that the demands for partial concessions from the imperialists were replaced by slogans calling for complete national liberation.

The involvement of the working class as a more or less organised force in the national liberation movement began to affect the social content of that movement's programme. In the latter there now appeared demands for agrarian reforms, for the curtailment or elimination of feudal privileges, for shorter working hours, etc. Workers' organisations also introduced to the movement proletarian methods of struggle.

The demand for economic independence was the crucial preoccupation of the liberation movement in Latin America. In view of the higher level of class struggle already achieved in that continent, in comparison with that found in Asia and Africa, the bourgeoisie was even more prone to waver in its struggle against imperialist domination. The proletariat, on the other hand, was greater in strength and better organised, and the communist parties in Latin America emerged, as a rule, in the first half of the 1920s. The working class had already a certain amount of experience and authority in anti-imperialist, democratic campaigning, although it did not succeed in assuming the role of leader for all patriotic and democratic forces.

Part four is devoted to the international labour movement in the years of the Second World War. The aggressive imperialist plans of the fascists went hand in hand with their class goal, that of routing communism, above all its Soviet bastion. The short-sighted, conniving approach adopted by the ruling circles in other capitalist countries and the class-based egoism of the latter made it possible for the aggressor to unleash a world war.

In contrast, however, to all that took place in the years 1914-1918 the imperialist reactionaries now found themselves up against infinitely more powerful resistance on the part of the forces striving for democracy and peace. In the first place a powerful, peace-loving socialist state was opposing their plans. Secondly, thanks to the efforts of the Communists, the imperialists failed to disrupt international proletarian and democratic solidarity or to prevent the emergence of an organised liberation movement against the occupying troops and aggressors, against fascism. Thirdly, the bourgeoisie in the United States, Britain, France and other non-fascist countries, while defending its economic and political interests, was obliged to take part in the war against the Axis powers: indeed, patriotic sections of the bourgeoisie in certain countries made their contribu-

tion to the Resistance. As a result of this, during the Second World War the anti-fascist line calling for liberation became a dominant trend and the first proletarian state that had been nurtured by the international labour movement came to be the main, decisive force in the rout of the fascist clique within the imperialist camp.

In the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people the world's first socialist state showed its all-round superiority, and the driving force behind that state, which gave it its lead, was the working class. There were many examples of heroism in the name of justice in past ages, yet the unprecedented scale of heroism showed by Soviet men and women lent a new note to this heroism: it pointed to the fact that in a socialist environment a new man had emerged, embodying all the finest features of the working class—devotion to lofty humanist ideals, readiness for self-sacrifice in the name of those ideals, socialist patriotism and internationalism. Men of this new type were not rare, they did not constitute a thin stratum of society, they could be counted in dozens of millions.

The decisive role of the Soviet Union in the war against fascism contributed to an enormous extent to the increased authority enjoyed by socialism, the working class and its vanguard—the communist movement.

In the capitalist world, the emergence of the working class as the leading force among all anti-fascists took place against a backcloth of tense political struggle, defeatism and collaborationist tactics from certain sections of the ruling classes. The bewilderment, disorder and differences of opinion during the period when the Hitlerite war machine was celebrating stunning victories affected not only bourgeois opponents of nazism but also a good number of social democratic leaders.

At this critical time it was precisely the Communists who led the struggle for the creation of a united anti-fascist front. Without hesitation they attached prime importance to organising militant, armed resistance; they took upon themselves the role of the main cohesive force mobilising the anti-fascists into action. As a result of this, working-class leadership in the anti-fascist liberation struggle was recognised by the broad masses, and also in many cases by anti-fascists from the bourgeois camp. The mass-scale anti-fascist struggle which in most countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, in Italy and France had culminated in uprisings and struck serious blows against fascism, thus creating the prerequisites for such an upsurge among the proletarian and democratic masses that the bourgeoisie's schemes to re-establish pre-war orders were thwarted in many countries. In France and Italy, although the bourgeoisie maintained its sway, it was, however, only at the price of substantial concessions to the working people. In the countries of Europe liberat-

ed by the Soviet Army the moral and political authority of the working class and of its revolutionary vanguard was so great, and the bourgeoisie so widely discredited that this led a number of these countries to embark upon a socialist path of development.

The influence of communist parties that had proved themselves most consistent opponents of the fascist aggressors also gained a good deal of ground in countries that had been party to the anti-fascist coalition and in neutral countries.

In the colonial and dependent countries the policy pursued by the metropolitan countries that had entered the anti-Hitler and anti-Japanese coalition, pushed the national liberation movement in the direction of their imperialist rivals, the states of the fascist bloc. In these particularly complex conditions the communist parties made every effort to ensure that the upsurge of national sentiment should not screen the main danger stemming from Germany and Japan and that the national liberation movement should retain its anti-fascist character. The Communists' consistent opposition to fascism provided a guideline for all true fighters for national liberation, and the communist parties which had played an active part in the Resistance had come to represent a larger force in the countries of Asia and Africa.

During the years of the Second World War *proletarian internationalism* had to undergo a severe test. Not only did this principle play a major part in ensuring the cohesion and united stand of the working class itself in the grim conditions of the world war, but it can also be said to have extended beyond strictly proletarian limits and to have brought together the broad democratic masses in a very large number of countries. Thanks to this internationalism the proletariat could demonstrate in practice its capacity to act as a class expressing the progressive interests of the whole of society.

The importance of the experience gleaned in the anti-fascist and liberation struggle cannot be overestimated for the educational and political rise of the working class as the leading class in the new historical era. The masses of the working people, many millions strong, who had come to appreciate the proletariat's determination, ability and moral right to assume the role of a progressive driving force behind society free from selfish class interests had made considerable strides forward in their understanding of the proletariat's historic mission.

It can be seen now that the qualities of the working class as the *leading class of the new historical era* formed and developed both in socialist construction and the revolutionary struggle. The building of socialism in the Soviet Union, the class and anti-fascist struggle in the early stages of the general crisis of capitalism served to shape the crucial contribution made by the working class to the world revolu-

tionary process over those twenty years to which this volume is devoted. In this connection the policies of the Soviet Union and the communist movement reflected the main trend for the further advance of the international working class towards its lofty goals, to its provision of ideological leadership in the progress of mankind and finally in more concrete terms, at the end of the period under discussion, to a new period of history in which socialism, spreading beyond the bounds of one country, was transformed into a world system.

The authors who took part in the preparation of this volume represent the following institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences: World History Institute, USSR History Institute, the International Working-Class Movement Institute, the Institute for Oriental Studies, the Institute for Slavonic and Balkan Studies, the Institute of the Economy of the World Socialist System and also the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee.

Part One
BUILDERS
OF THE FIRST SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Chapter 1

THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE USSR

As soon as the national economy had been rehabilitated following the foreign intervention and Civil War the Soviet working class, led by the Communist Party, directed its main efforts at solving the central problem facing the proletarian revolution—how to build a socialist society. A new stage had now begun in the struggle to build socialism. Socialism which had previously been a theory or a dream of the working people for a better future now had to be put into practice, to become economic and social reality, the tangible inspiration for millions of men and women spread over one sixth of the world's surface.

Lenin stressed that the road to socialism would “never be straight, it will be incredibly involved...”¹. It goes without saying that the hardest problems—concerning the theory, practice and psychological implications of socialism—were those shouldered by the Soviet working class, which first blazed this trail leading into the future.

The working class was called upon to carry out tasks of an unprecedented scale and difficulty. The progressive classes that came to power as a result of bourgeois revolutions had only to adapt the political superstructure to meet the requirements of the new economic basis that had spontaneously taken shape within the framework of the old society. When the proletarian revolution took place there were no ready-made forms for the socialist mode of production. This meant that for the first time in history the working class was embarking upon the creation of the material and technical base for socialism and guiding the process for the shaping of new, socialist production relations. After once putting an end to the exploitation of man by man, while strengthening its commanding heights, won in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1965, p. 130 (here and hereafter Progress Publishers, Moscow).

years immediately after October 1917, the working class now had to set up a fundamentally new basis for economic and social development.

The task of socialist construction in the USSR was made particularly complicated in view of a number of historical conditions. The level of development of pre-revolutionary Russia's productive forces had been relatively low and the country's economy had been disrupted by the destruction that ensued from the First World War and the Civil War, the war of intervention and the economic blockade organised by the international bourgeoisie. Russia's encirclement by capitalist countries had intensified the resistance of the deposed classes and the vacillation of the petty-bourgeois strata, and fanned the flames of counter-revolution. The world's first proletarian state was being subjected to serious pressure from without. Imperialist circles were not hiding their anti-Soviet, aggressive intentions. The working class and the other working people of the USSR were faced by the choice of either building up a powerful economy within a very short period by almost superhuman effort and thus strengthening their defence potential, or of being destroyed by the international forces of imperialism.

The working class led by the Communist Party was not daunted by this great historic task. Taking as their guide Lenin's programme for the building of socialism that charted out the development of productive forces, the transformation of social relations and the reshaping of men's outlook and aspirations, the working people of the country carried out their work for which there was no historical precedent anywhere in the world.

The power of socialist ideas, the advantages of socialist production relations, the cohesion and organisation of the working class and their vanguard—the Communist Party, the creative enthusiasm of the popular masses were so great that even in unfavourable conditions the world's first socialist society was built in what by historical standards was an extremely short time. This represented a vast step forward in the execution by the proletariat of their world-wide historic mission.

The success achieved in socialist construction which demonstrated in practice the feasibility of socialist ideals and the superiority of the new social order furthered the world revolutionary process. The victory of socialism in the USSR demonstrated for all to see the advantages of a new social order for resolving the fundamental problems inherent in a new historical age and thus enhanced the authority of the working class as the driving force behind social advance, providing inspiration for the struggle of the progressive, democratic forces in the world as a whole. "Socialist transformations in Russia paved the way for the revolutionary change of the social

aspect of our planet, creating a solid base in one state for the international liberation movement."¹

As it worked to build socialism the working class also found solutions to the main problems of the age, opened up new horizons for mankind's social progress and led the way towards the liberation of the working people of the whole world.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS OF THE IMPERIALISTS

After routing the armies of intervention sent against it by the forces of international imperialism the Soviet working class, led by the Communist Party, upheld the gains of the Great October Revolution and secured peace that was such an essential prerequisite for socialist construction. However, the position of the Soviet state in relation to the countries outside remained complex and fraught with tension. After experiencing a setback in their attempts to "nip communism in the bud", the leaders of the capitalist world were unwilling even to contemplate any long-term coexistence with a country that had dared to try and undermine the entrenched principles of their society based upon exploitation.

In the late 1920s, the imperialist powers stepped up their activity directed against the Soviet state. In 1927, provocative attacks were instigated against Soviet missions in China and Britain. In June 1927, the Soviet plenipotentiary in Warsaw, P.L. Voikov, was killed. The Conservative British Government of the time broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The imperialist powers incited the states sharing borders with the Soviet Union to embark upon acts of armed provocation. In 1929, Chinese militarists made an armed attack on Soviet territory. A number of capitalist countries introduced restrictions designed to obstruct trade with the USSR. All this served to demonstrate that the old world had not given up its plans to wipe out the state of the workers and peasants. The working people of the USSR were forced at one and the same time to proceed with the building of socialism, while making an all-out effort to defend their country.

The main task before the working class and its Communist Party in the sphere of foreign policy was to ensure the most possible favourable conditions in the international arena for the building of the new society. While resolutely condemning and warding off the anti-Soviet, military, political and economic actions of the imperialists, the USSR actively pursued the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence

¹ *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*. Theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, 1970, p. 18 (in Russian).

with the capitalist countries and of normal political and economic relations with the latter.

The creation of the most favourable conditions for the implementation of socialist transformations within the country, which provided the crucial foundation for the world revolutionary process, helped the Soviet working class to carry out its vital international task of supporting and helping in all possible ways the revolutionary struggle of the working people.

Inherent in the foreign policy of the victorious proletariat was tremendous moral and political potential. From the moment it had come into being the Republic of the Soviets had constituted the main bastion of peace in the world. Its policy of peace and friendship expressed the fundamental law of the socialist order, which has no vested interest in aggressive wars or in the enslavement of peoples outside its own borders. Unlike the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries which planned and acted in accordance with military considerations and designs for the domination of one group of countries over others, the working class, when it came to power, put forward principles of foreign policy and international relations that were quite new. The humanist essence of socialism found expression in the Soviet Union's struggle for peace, as also did the fact that the working class upholds not only its values and ideals determined by class interests but also by those of mankind as a whole.

The working class of the USSR upheld the cause of peace against the imperialists and their most aggressive progeny, the fascists: it condemned all aggression in principle, as indeed colonialism, the seizure of foreign lands and the enslavement of their peoples, the interference in internal affairs of other states, and campaigned for the right of every people to self-determination, i.e., to have the right to determine its own destiny and to wage a revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation. The foreign policy of the working people's republic reflected Karl Marx's vision of "a new Society... whose International rule will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!*"¹

Relying on the growing power of the socialist state and the increasing support from the working class throughout the world, the Land of Soviets not only repulsed sallies by the imperialists but also consolidated its international position.

Attempts by aggressive circles in the capitalist countries to ensure the diplomatic isolation of the Soviet Union failed. In 1924, the diplomatic blockade was breached to which the Land of Soviets had been subjected since 1918. By January 1925 the Soviet Union had established diplomatic relations with twenty-one states. In the

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, Moscow, 1976, p. 39.

late 1920s and early 1930s the Soviet Union concluded non-aggression treaties and neutrality agreements with Turkey, Germany, Afghanistan, Iran, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and France.

Bourgeois propaganda did not succeed in denigrating the socialist state in the eyes of the rest of the world. Moreover, the capitalist countries were obliged more and more to come to terms with the USSR's greater influence in the international arena and in the popularity of Soviet foreign policy among the masses. In the early 1930s the United States, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Belgium and a number of other countries established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

A pointer to the growing international importance of the USSR and to the authority of its peaceful policies was provided by the invitation extended by 30 countries to the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations. In September 1934, this invitation was accepted by the Soviet Government. The Soviet Union could not, of course, ignore the balance of forces that had emerged within the League of Nations and the reluctance of the imperialist states represented there constructively to resolve international issues, above all those relating to the maintenance of peace and to disarmament. Being well aware that the nature of the League of Nations was unlikely to change, the Soviet Union set out to support those states anxious to oppose fascist aggression and make use of the platform and machinery of the League of Nations to this end.

The anti-Soviet policies of the imperialist powers were pursued against the background of a mounting threat of a new war, exacerbated by the world economic crisis of 1929-1932. The imperialists sought a way out of this crisis, and out of the antagonisms and contradictions that were tearing capitalist society apart, through the establishment of fascist dictatorships, the militarisation of the economy and the unleashing of aggressive wars.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the states with totalitarian, fascist regimes openly embarked on a path of aggression. In 1931, Japanese militarists invaded North-Eastern China and occupied Manchuria, thus opening up a seat of war in the Far East. After Hitler came to power in 1933, Germany set in motion feverish war preparations. This was how the main arena for world war began to emerge. In 1935, fascist Italy unleashed an aggressive war against Ethiopia. In the summer of 1936, there followed the invasion of republican Spain by Germany and Italy. War was to encroach still further across European territory when military-cum-political treaties were concluded between Germany and Italy (the Berlin-Rome axis) and also between Germany and Japan (the Anti-Comintern pact): this signalled the creation of an aggressive bloc set on unleashing a world war.

The fascist states made no secret of their anti-communism and their plans for a crusade against the USSR. Meanwhile the governments in the countries of bourgeois democracy—Britain, France and the United States—for all intents and purposes were pandering to the fascist regimes by supporting the aggressive trends in their foreign policies, counting on being able to use the fascists as the main strike force in the struggle against the USSR.

An historic service of the Soviet working class, of the revolutionary proletariat, is that they were the first to point out the enormously dangerous implications of fascism not only for one or more particular countries but for mankind as a whole. It was inevitable from the historical point of view that the first socialist country should head the struggle to check the fascist aggressors, to defend the social and democratic achievements of the peoples and protect world culture and civilisation.

The fact that peace was the prime goal of socialist foreign policy made the Land of the Soviets the natural ally of the forces striving to combat the military threat of fascism. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov made it clear at the Extraordinary 8th Congress of Soviets in November 1936 that the Soviet Union sought "peace for itself and the other peoples and was therefore offering them its collaboration. It expects from others not words about peace, but active organisational effort to ensure the same."¹

In its struggle to avert war, the Soviet Government took into account the differences between the imperialist states, the pacifist inclinations and the realistic attitude towards the threat of fascist aggression for all states adopted by certain representatives of the ruling class in Europe. It attached overriding importance to the task of coordinating the peace-orientated foreign policy of the USSR, with the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries, the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples and the broad-based, democratic anti-war movement with its noble aim of preserving peace. Soviet foreign policy initiatives promoted the growth of the international movement against the impending war.

Discussions on the subject of general disarmament initiated by the Soviet Union at that time were of crucial importance. Between 1928 and 1932 Soviet proposals were discussed in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and also at the Geneva Disarmament Conference (1932). Although these proposals were not adopted, they played an important role in activating the mass struggle against war.

In 1933, the Soviet Union put forward a proposal for concluding a joint agreement on mutual assistance in the case of aggression with

¹ *Pravda*, November 29, 1936.

France, Finland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic states. Such an agreement could have provided the basis for a system of collective security in Europe. In 1935, successful efforts were made to conclude a Soviet-French and a Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of mutual assistance. In 1936, a protocol was signed providing for mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, which played an important part in frustrating the aggressive plans of the Japanese imperialists directed against Mongolia and the USSR.

In the League of Nations, Soviet representatives called for the establishment of a system of collective security, for the adoption of effective measures against the war-mongers. In August 1936, the Soviet delegation to the League of Nations announced a proposal for measures designed to consolidate collective security. The USSR proposed that regional pacts providing for mutual assistance should be concluded between the states of specific geographic regions.

The Soviet Union campaigned tirelessly for the adoption of effective measures to stop the Italian aggression in Ethiopia. The Soviet Government went all out to persuade the governments of bourgeois democracies resolutely to oppose German and Italian intervention in Spain.

While in the diplomatic sphere these steps made by the USSR met with opposition from the governments of the capitalist countries, it was impossible to exaggerate the moral and political impact they had on the international public. The anti-war movement in capitalist countries, the international congresses organised by fighters for peace, the movements of solidarity with the peoples of Ethiopia and republican Spain, and other acts undertaken by peace-loving forces stirred the imagination of wide sectors of society, whose struggle was to play a far from insignificant role in the international isolation of the fascist aggressors and in undermining the plans of imperialist reactionaries to set up a united anti-Soviet front.

Loyalty to proletarian internationalism remained the invariable foundation for the foreign policy of the Soviet working class. The main inspiration encouraging proletarian solidarity came at that time from the world's first socialist country. The activity of the Soviet working class in the international arena had nothing whatsoever in common with so-called "Soviet intervention" in the internal affairs of other countries, as bourgeois and reformist historians allege. The Communist Party (Bolsheviks) rejected out of hand Trotskyite theories of "pushing" revolutions in the West. The USSR consistently pursued a Leninist foreign policy aimed at furthering the coexistence of countries with different social systems.

The active involvement of the Soviet working class in the international movement for proletarian solidarity was a natural outcome of the common interests shared by the working people of the whole

world, not the result of geopolitical calculations, as bourgeois ideologues proclaimed.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union afforded tremendous help to the Chinese people. The Soviet working class was behind all the large-scale international campaigns for solidarity with the Chinese revolution. On September 5, 1924, when it was made known that the British imperialists were making ready for armed intervention against revolutionary China, the presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions turned to the Soviet working people and the workers of all countries with an appeal for them to oppose the intervention in China. Four days later the Hands Off China Society numbered over a million members.¹

Demonstrations in support of the Chinese revolution were striking because of their enormous scale. The newspaper of the Chinese Communists *Gunen Zhiwu* said on July 7, 1926 that "the whole Russian people is participating in this movement to help China". With reference to the support shown by the working people of the USSR for the national liberation struggle of the Chinese people, Sun Yatsen wrote: "We must not forget that free Russia came forward with the slogan 'Hands off China'... When it comes to the slogans that ring out from Moscow distance does not exist. They flash forth through the world like lightning, and stir the heart of every working man.... We know that the Soviets will never support an unjust cause. If they are supporting us, this means that truth is on our side too, and truth cannot fail to conquer, the cause of justice is bound to triumph over violence."²

After Japan's attack on China in 1937 the Soviet Union was the only country which announced its readiness to help China in the war against the invaders. After failing to secure the support of the Western powers, the Kuomintang government was forced to sign in 1937 a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union, a treaty which made provision for wide-scale Soviet aid to China.

The support given by the Soviet people to the heroic war of national liberation waged by the people of Spain forms a shining page in the annals of the international working class. The Soviet Government undertook energetic diplomatic efforts to put an end to German and Italian intervention in Spain. The Soviet Union subscribed to the non-intervention agreement, hoping to localise the civil war in Spain and stop it growing into world conflict and also to prevent Germany and Italy from interfering in the internal affairs of that country. When it became obvious that this policy of "non-interven-

¹ *The Leninist Policy of the USSR towards China*, Moscow, 1968, p. 59 (in Russian).

² Quoted from Ping Min, *A History of Chinese-Soviet Friendship*, Moscow, 1959, p. 146 (in Russian).

tion" merely provided a façade for German and Italian intervention, the Soviet Government announced that it regarded any obligations stemming from the non-intervention agreement as no longer binding.¹

The Soviet Union gave wide-scale economic and military assistance to republican Spain. During the war 648 planes, 347 tanks, 60 armoured trucks, 1,186 guns, 20,486 machine-guns, and 497,813 bayonets were delivered to republican Spain from the Soviet Union and also large shipments of ammunition and military equipment.²

In response to a request from the Spanish Government the Soviet Union sent a large group of military advisors to Spain, chief among them being Y.K. Berzin, G.M. Stern, K.M. Kachanov, K.A. Meretskov, B.I. Simonov. Soviet engineers, technicians and workers afforded Spain considerable help by setting up and organising its arms industry. Of the 42,000 anti-fascist volunteers from 54 countries who fought in Spain in the International Brigades, close on 3,000 were from the Soviet Union. Soviet volunteers showed outstanding heroism and courage in the struggle of the Spanish people, 59 of them were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union; 19 of these awards were posthumous.

The Soviet people was at the forefront of the movement for international solidarity with republican Spain. Rallies calling for solidarity with the heroic Spanish people were held throughout the country. At Soviet factories orders for Spain were regarded as assignments of great responsibility that it was an honour to receive. They were entrusted to the finest production workers.

In 1936, those present at a 120,000-strong meeting of Muscovites issued an appeal for the organisation of a fund to assist the Spanish patriots. Between August 1936 and 1939 the Soviet working people collected a total of 274 million roubles that was duly sent to Spain.³ Since March 1937 the children of Spanish fighters against fascism began to arrive in the Soviet Union. They received their schooling and vocational training in the Soviet Union, which was to become for them a second home.⁴

The position adopted in these matters by the Soviet Union in a spirit of proletarian internationalism was in complete accord with the fight against fascism in the name of peace and independence for the peoples of the world.

¹ *The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1945*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1980, p. 323 (in Russian).

² M. T. Meshcheryakov, *The Spanish Republic and the Comintern*, Moscow, 1981, p. 51 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ V. A. Talashova, *The Soviet Komsomol Is an Active Participant in the Movement for Solidarity with Republican Spain during the National-Revolutionary War (1936-1939)*, Leningrad, 1972, p. 14 (in Russian).

Soviet foreign policy provided a model for *combining efforts of Party, Government and people in order to resolve problems of international relations*. In all societies based on exploitation questions of foreign policy are carefully kept away from the masses. In this new, socialist society, on the other hand, the Party and Government made special efforts to educate the widest possible sectors of the population on questions of foreign policy and actively involve them in foreign-policy activity.

The working class and its organisations played a prominent role in the shaping of the Soviet Union's international ties. The activity of Soviet mass organisations was particularly great in such international bodies as the Red International of Labour Unions, the Communist Youth International, International Red Aid, the Anti-Imperialist League, the Red Sport International, the International Society of War Veterans, the International Association of Free-Thinking Proletarians, the International Union of Friends of the USSR. Soviet mass organisations took an active part in the international anti-war movement, in the work of the International Committee for the Fight against War and Fascism, whose members included A.M. Gorky, N.M. Shvernik and E.D. Stasova. A national Anti-War Committee was set up in the Soviet Union.

The years of all-out socialist construction in the USSR were characterised by rapid development of the international ties established by the Soviet working class. Delegations of Soviet workers began visiting foreign countries.¹

New forms of international contacts also began to appear. In August 1929, the railway-workers of Hamburg appealed to Soviet railway-workers to engage in international competition in revolutionary activity. This appeal met with a large-scale response. Hundreds of agreements for international revolutionary competition of this type were drawn up between workers' collectives in the USSR and workers in Germany, France, Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Soviet workers pledged to fulfil plans for socialist construction ahead of schedule. Workers from other countries promised to intensify their anti-war, anti-fascist struggle, to intensify their union activities, propagate Soviet achievements in socialist construction and expose the anti-Soviet schemes of the imperialists and much else besides.

No significant class battle or demonstration by an oppressed people took place anywhere that did not produce a keen response and active support from the Soviet working people. When in 1926 the General Strike began in Britain, large demonstrations and rallies were held

¹ L. S. Ozerov, *Socialist Construction in the USSR and International Proletarian Solidarity (1921-1937)*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 195-96 (in Russian).

in support of the British workers. Of the total 18,800,000 roubles received by the British miners during the strike 11,400,000 were from Soviet workers. In the greeting sent by the Miners' Federation of Great Britain to the 7th Congress of the Trade Unions of the USSR it was pointed out: "Many have extended to us valuable support, but the spontaneous and magnanimous help sent by our Russian comrades with no strings attached whatsoever is particularly appreciated and will always be remembered gratefully by the mining population of Britain."¹

The working class of the USSR gave both moral and material support to the striking workers of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy, France, Belgium, India, Japan, Syria, Canada and a number of other countries.

Soviet workers took part in the international campaign in defence of worker activists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti who were condemned to death in the United States for a crime they had not committed. In the USSR, hundreds of meetings were held, funds were collected at many factories, which were sent to the International Red Aid organisation for the solidarity campaign in support of the legal defence of the American workers.

In the summer of 1927, the Soviet working class gave help to those taking part in the revolutionary battles of the Viennese proletariat.

The Soviet working people protested strongly against the firing at the Mayday demonstration in Berlin in 1929. A campaign to help the families of the German workers killed and wounded was started in Moscow on the initiative of the city's metal-workers. In the summer and autumn of 1929, a number of groups of German workers came to the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Central Committee of International Red Aid in the USSR. They were allocated places in Soviet sanatoria where they could recuperate.²

The working class of the USSR took an active part in international campaigns of solidarity with victims of bourgeois terror and repression, including campaigns to save nine unjustly condemned Black youths from Scottsboro, to free Tom Mooney and to grant asylum to political émigrés, and against repressive treatment of progressive forces in Austria and Spain.³

¹ 7th Congress of the Trade Unions of the USSR (December 6-18, 1926). *Plenary Sessions and Section Meetings. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1927, p. 835 (in Russian).

² *Pravda*, June 7, 1929; the journal *Path of International Red Aid*, Issue 21, 1929, p. 16.

³ *Results of the Activity of International Red Aid (1922-1947). Report drawn up by the Presidium of Soviet IRA's Central Committee*, Moscow, 1948, p. 34 (in Russian).

The Soviet working people were the first to respond to the appeal for help for the victims of fascist terror in Germany. A vivid demonstration of this support was found in the struggle to free Georgi Dimitrov, Ernst Thälmann and thousands of German anti-fascists. Georgi Dimitrov wrote: "We know to whom we owe our rescue. If it were not for the Comintern and international proletarian efforts, our press, *Pravda*, if it were not for the formidable strength of the Soviet working class, we would not be alive here now."¹

Soviet men and women protested angrily at the repressive measures instigated by the Austrian authorities against those who had taken part in the uprising in Vienna in February 1934: funds were collected to help the families of those workers who had been killed. In their message to the Austrian workers at that time the working people of Leningrad declared: "Comrades, in your brave armed struggle against the fascist regime, a regime of hunger and poverty, exploitation and white terror, you have written one of the most magnificent chapters in the history of the revolutionary movement."² In response to a proposal from the Red Putilovets factory a fund was set up under the auspices of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions to support the Austrian defenders of the workers' cause. As a result of the repression instigated against those taking part in the uprising, the Soviet Union offered political asylum to a large group of armed workers' detachments, men from the *Schutzbund*. In 1934 and 1935 close on 800 men who had taken part in the February battles in Austria arrived in the USSR with their families. In addition, some 120 children of *Schutzbund* fighters who had fallen in the fighting or been arrested were cared for and educated in a Moscow children's home.³ In February 1935, *Schutzbund* men who had been working in Leningrad sent a letter to the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, Mikhail Kalinin, in which they wrote: "...what the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union have done for us bears witness to the sincerity of international proletarian solidarity that has become tangible reality. The country where the dictatorship of the proletariat holds sway provides us every day with ample evidence of the fact that it is our socialist Fatherland in the true sense of the word."⁴

¹ *Pravda*, February 28, 1934.

² R. S. Mnukhina. "The International Solidarity of the Working People with the Austrian Proletariat in February 1934", *Leningrad University Transactions. Questions of Modern History (Historical Sciences Series)*, No. 194, Issue 23, 1955, p. 193 (in Russian).

³ *International Beacon*, No. 19, 1934, p. 11; No. 3, 1935, p. 11 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Cause of the Working People of the World. Materials, Documents and Sketches Relating to Fraternal Assistance and Solidarity of the Working People of Foreign Countries with the Peoples of the USSR*, Moscow, 1957, p. 314 (in Russian).

In its turn, the Soviet working class received more and more help from the proletariat of other countries¹. Delegations of workers from the capitalist countries began to visit the Soviet Union: in the decade from 1924 to 1934 around 120 delegations of foreign workers came to the Soviet Union². These visits by workers' delegations to the Soviet Union added greatly to the momentum of the movement in support of the Land of Soviets. First-hand experience of Soviet reality made a great impact on the working people from abroad: the words spoken by Ernst Thälmann, leader of the German Communists, were borne out time and time again: "Graphic examples of the dictatorship of the proletariat make more convincing arguments for socialism than the seventy years of patient propaganda work prior to November 1917."³ It was by no means a coincidence that precisely such workers' delegations that had visited the USSR were to emerge as the initiators behind the setting up of societies for friendship with the USSR in their own countries in the years that followed.

The working people of the capitalist countries gave concrete help to the USSR through the collection of funds for the five-year plans, by collecting and dispatching technical equipment to the USSR and by passing on information regarding production techniques and technological advances, through working on the new projects for the five-year plans on a contractual basis. Given the enormous scale of socialist construction, this help may not appear very significant, viewed in terms of pure figures, yet its ideological and political impact was inestimable. Fraternal support from the proletariat of other countries fanned the creative energy of Soviet men and women and inspired them to ever new labour exploits.

The involvement of large sections of the working people in other countries in the fostering of international ties with the Soviet Union, in the movement to support the world's first socialist country was a tremendously enlightening experience for all concerned. The international proletariat, as noted by Kalinin at a celebration meeting of Moscow City Soviet to mark the twelfth anniversary of the October Revolution, "is coming more and more with each passing year to see the Soviet Union as its true Fatherland and the cause of the Soviet Union, the cause of the working class and the peasantry in the USSR as a cause that closely concerns them, and to see us, the workers and peasants, as their vanguard".⁴ International solidarity was the reflec-

¹ See Chapter 4 of this volume.

² *Trade Unions in the USSR: Documents and Materials*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1963, p. 680 (in Russian); *Trud*, May 9, 1932; November 11, 1932; May 1, November 10 and 14, 1933.

³ Ernst Thälmann, *Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1955, p. 271.

⁴ M. I. Kalinin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, 1926-1932, Moscow, 1960, p. 361 (in Russian).

tion of the enormous step forward in the awareness of the workers of all countries of the fact that they belonged to the world army of the proletariat welded together by common class interests and a common cause—the fight for socialism.

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

By the mid-1920s the socialist structure had taken firm root in the country's economy: in 1925, the socialist sector of large-scale industry accounted for 96.1 per cent of total output, and that within industry as a whole for 81 per cent.¹ The Lenin-guided plan of the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia was being successfully implemented. The progress of industrial planning and that of the regulation of agriculture made it possible to compile centrally planned accounts covering all spheres of the economy. By this time large-scale industrial production had been made operational once more and its output in 1925 had reached three quarters of the pre-war figure. The area of land under cultivation had now almost reached the pre-war level and the gross yield in agriculture had exceeded that level by 12 per cent.² The number of factory workers had now almost reached the pre-war level and their levels of productivity and political consciousness were considerably higher than before. There had also been a considerable improvement in the material position of the industrial workers, the working peasants and the office workers. The undeniably essential prerequisites for the creation of the material and technical base of a socialist society had been provided. Realising the country's potentialities now required the mobilisation of all the forces the Party and the working masses could muster.

The shift to the execution of new tasks took place against a complex background. On January 21, 1924 the Party, the Soviet people and the international labour movement suffered a grievous loss: the death of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "a giant among scientific thinkers and a true popular leader, an ardent revolutionary and the creator of the Communist Party and the world's first socialist state".³

The next day the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) drew up an appeal entitled: "To the Party, to All Working People". It read: "Never since Marx has the history of the great liberation movement of the proletariat brought forth such a giant as our deceased leader, teacher and friend. All that is

¹ *A Short History of the USSR*, Part II, Moscow, 1972, p. 183 (in Russian).

² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 4, Book 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 371 (in Russian).

³ *To Mark the 110th Anniversary of the Birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU, December 13, 1979*, Moscow, 1980, p. 3 (in Russian).

great and heroic in the proletariat was magnificently embodied in Lenin whose name has become the symbol of the new world in every corner of the globe—a fearless mind, an unswerving, resolute, iron will that would overcome all obstacles, a profound hatred of slavery and oppression that was a hatred unto death, revolutionary ardour that could move mountains, a boundless faith in the creative power of the masses and a tremendous gift for leadership.”¹ Rallies and meetings to mourn Lenin’s death were held all over the country. On January 27, the coffin containing Lenin’s body was placed in the Mausoleum on Red Square. Factories and offices throughout the land observed a five minutes’ silence.

In Berlin, Paris, London, Prague, Warsaw, Havana, Copenhagen, Peking and other cities of the world rallies and demonstrations were held to mark Lenin’s death. Workers from Chicago wrote in their telegram to the Executive Committee of the Comintern: “Together with workers throughout the world we mourn at this great loss suffered by the international working class. Lenin is dead but his ideals shall live on in us.”² The Central Committee of the Communist Party of France wrote: “With the name of Lenin on their lips and the image of him in their hearts the workers will carry on the struggle, never turning aside from the path charted by Lenin.”³

In a special appeal to mark the occasion the Executive Committee of the Communist International we read: “Follow Lenin’s behests which are still the driving force behind his Party and everything that his life’s work brought into being.”⁴

For the Soviet working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party, to follow Lenin’s behests meant above all implementing Lenin’s plan for the building of socialism, which presupposed socialist industrialisation, the socialist transformation of agriculture and the completion of a cultural revolution.

After Lenin’s death those opposed to Lenin’s teaching on the feasibility of the victory of socialism first of all in one individual country once again became active. This undoubtedly held back the work of the Communist Party aimed at putting into practice Lenin’s plan for the building of socialism. However, thanks to the ideological and political maturity of the Party’s leading cadres and also of its rank and file, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union proved equal to the great, historic tasks confronting it.

The 14th Party Conference, which was held in April 1925, summed

¹ *The CPSU in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 534 (in Russian).

² *Pravda*, January 30, 1924.

³ *L’Humanité*, January 23, 1924.

⁴ *Pravda*, January 24, 1924.

up the results of the discussion on the feasibility of the victory of socialism in one country. In December 1925, the 14th Congress of the CPSU (Bolsheviks) defined the path of socialist development to be followed, stating that: "We should channel economic development, bearing in mind that we aim to transform the USSR from a country that imports machinery and equipment into one that produces machinery and equipment, to ensure that the USSR in its present situation of capitalist encirclement should not under any circumstances be turned into an economic appendage of the world capitalist economy...."¹ This proclamation of a *course aimed at socialist industrialisation* marked for the USSR the beginning of a period of reconstruction of its whole economy on a new technical and social basis. In a resolution passed at the 14th Congress it was pointed out that socialism was becoming more and more a living reality and that men could now see "the *economic offensive* of the proletariat on the basis of a new economic policy and the advance of the USSR's economy in the direction of socialism".²

In modern bourgeois historical writing it is widely maintained that socialist industrialisation is merely one of the ways to put an end to technical and economic backwardness, which differs in no major respects from capitalist industrialisation.

In practice the Soviet people was to perform all the tasks that the Russian capitalists had neglected: to overcome the country's technical and economic backwardness, set up heavy industry and put an end to the country's dependence upon foreign capital. Yet in its social goals and methods socialist industrialisation was fundamentally different from its capitalist counterpart. Capitalist industrialisation strengthened the system of exploitation and bourgeois domination. Socialist industrialisation which had brought in its wake the complete elimination of exploitation of man by man, was designed to elevate the working class in all possible ways to its new role as the ruling class in society.

The intensification of the exploitation of the working people, the impoverishment of small-scale producers and the shameless plundering of colonies and dependent nations, even traffic in slaves, such were the sources of capital accumulation indispensable for capitalist industrialisation. At the same time agricultural over-population, unemployment in the towns and the poverty of the popular masses gave rise to extremely cruel economic pressure on the working people, compelling them to accept bad working conditions and submit to merciless capitalist discipline. However, the world-wide historic mission of the proletariat was precisely to put an end to all forms of

¹ *The CPSU in the Resolutions...*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 245.

² *Ibid.*, p. 246.

exploitation and to replace discipline based on economic compulsion by conscious discipline among the members of a work-force, all enjoying equal rights as creators and masters of their own destiny.

The new order in the Soviet Union put an end to exploitation, agrarian over-population and unemployment, and the backward borderlands, where the nationalities had formerly been exploited as subject peoples, were now afforded economic assistance. As a result of these radical changes the traditional methods used for the accumulation of capital became a thing of the past and far less recourse was made to economic compulsion as a means of strengthening labour discipline.

The Party and the working class had to find out totally different methods of industrialisation.

Pointing to the absence of appropriate conditions in the Soviet Union for implementing industrialisation by using capitalist methods, bourgeois theoreticians in those days concluded that the Soviet plans were unfeasible, since they declined to accept the plausibility of any other methods of industrialisation apart from the capitalist ones.

This dogmatic insistence on capitalist methods of industrialisation as the only possible ones was taken up by the opposition within the Party. It declared the tasks set the country by the Party were unrealistic. In the opinion of this opposition, the fact that the Party could not use capitalist sources of accumulation or capitalist methods to stimulate economic development meant that industrialisation would have to proceed more slowly than originally scheduled. Using arguments of this type N. Bukharin and his supporters came out in favour of preserving the private capitalist sector in the economy for a long period, while the Trotskyites in their turn advocated a policy involving direct exploitation of the peasantry.

The Soviet people was faced with the task of carrying out a totally new type of industrialisation which was to provide a firm foundation for the dictatorship of the proletariat and ensure the victory of socialist forms of the economy in town and country.¹

Within Soviet society there emerged fundamentally new sources of the accumulation of money and fundamentally new stimuli capable of giving an immeasurably greater momentum to economic development than all the economic levers familiar to the capitalists.

The elimination of private ownership of the main means of production put an end to the bourgeoisie's parasitic consumption. According to the calculations of Academician Stanislav Strumilin, the annual rate of net profit in Russian industry during the period 1885-1913 was 16.2 per cent and the rate for the annual growth of

¹ *From Capitalism to Socialism: Problems Central to the History of the Transition Period in the USSR. 1917-1937*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1981, p. 61 (in Russian).

fixed capital was only 7.2 per cent.¹ The difference between these two figures indicates that the enormous sums of surplus value were used by the propertied classes for their personal consumption.

As a result of land nationalisation and the elimination of the land-owning class the colossal payments formerly made by the peasants in the shape of feudal and capitalist rents that had bled the agrarian economy of enormous resources had become a thing of the past. The taxes on the peasantry were drastically cut down, which meant that the peasants now had considerable means at their disposal to improve their conditions of life and develop their holdings.

The nationalisation of the enterprises owned by foreign capitalists, the cancellation of debts which at the end of 1917 totalled the enormous sum of 64,000 million gold roubles² made it possible to amass considerable resources indispensable for the industrialisation drive.

The socialist sector of the economy was now to become a more reliable source for the accumulation of money and later indeed it was to be the all-important one. From 1929 onwards social production developed mainly thanks to this accumulation achieved within the socialist sector of the economy.

However the main qualitative advantages of socialist production came to the fore while industrial accumulated means were actually being utilised. Under capitalism the policy of capital investment is shaped by the race for profits and only furthers overall economic progress in a haphazard, random way bound to cause enormous cost to society. The concentration of all society's material resources in the hands of the proletarian state made it possible directly and deliberately to channel the sum total of the means accumulated throughout the country towards achieving the objectives of prime importance for society as a whole.

The utilisation of the accumulated means to achieve the objectives that further the interests of the whole of society not only proved to be enormously effective from the economic point of view, but also proved to be compatible with the interests of both the individual and society. This put an end to the mentality of the wage worker and brought forth new responses, those of masters of production for whom labour ceases to be forced and becomes an essential, primary need of the individual that is clearly understood. As the experience of building socialism demonstrated, a conscientious, socialist approach to work provided the key to a successful solution of the second requirement of the industrialisation drive—the creation of an essen-

¹ *Basic Trends Underlying the Construction of a Socialist Economy*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 237-38 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

tial incentive to work that gives rise to production enthusiasm that is unthinkable in a society based on exploitation.

Thus, the seeds for unprecedented potential for development had been sown in the Soviet economy. However this potential could not be realised in Soviet society in a haphazard way, as had been the case under all previous societies, but only as a result of deliberate efforts on the part of all members of that society, efforts which in their turn gave rise to new ideological and political problems that the Party and the working class had to come to terms with. In this connection Lenin pointed out: "Of all the socialists who have written about this, I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society, which pointed to this concrete, practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the task of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique accumulated by capitalism from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism."¹

Socialist industrialisation was being implemented for the first time in history. This meant that the Party and the working class were advancing along an uncharted path. The experience of revolutionary struggle and constructive activity gleaned by the Soviet working class demonstrated for all to see that the victory of consciousness over spontaneous activity engendered an irresistible tide of both revolutionary and creative energy, the like of which had never been seen before. Capitalist organisation of social labour holds back the transformation of conscious commitment into creative energy, if for no other reason than that the capitalist is undeniably interested in concealing the true goals of production designed to further the pursuit of profit, and in keeping the working people quite separate from the management of production, thus preserving the wage workers' alienated attitude to their work, and still maintaining economic coercion as the main incentive. The socialist state, on the other hand, is interested in ensuring that each worker is clearly aware of the true aims behind production and his role in their achievement, because under socialism keen interest in the overall results of production becomes a powerful incentive for labour activity. The socialist state not only dismantles the division between economics and politics but indeed regards economic development as its paramount ideological and political objective.

This approach made it possible to find concrete means for carrying out the constructive functions of the state of proletarian dictatorship.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils. May 26, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 412.

When pinpointing the raising of productivity as the main task in socialist construction, Lenin wrote: "...Socialism calls for a conscious mass advance to greater productivity of labour compared with capitalism, and on the basis achieved by capitalism. Socialism must achieve this advance *in its own way*, by its own methods—or, to put it more concretely, by *Soviet methods*."¹

This historic task meant that the Party had to assume the role of organising society's creative activity, of leading this mass-scale advance to higher productivity. The Party leadership now tackled a wide range of questions: defining economic policy, its strategy and tactics, dovetailing political and economic activities, implementing systematic control over economic and administrative bodies to ensure that Party decisions were duly carried out.

The Party had to surmount bitter opposition from anti-Leninist elements in its ranks. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and their supporters made every effort to turn the Party from its Leninist path. The Trotskyites who had been defeated in 1923-1924, and the Zinoviev-Kamenev "new opposition", that had been routed in December 1925, joined forces to form a capitulationist Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. In the hard struggle that ensued the opposition groups who had tried to split the Party were completely routed. The 15th Party Congress (December 1927) excluded from its ranks leaders and active members of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc.

The Party upheld and developed the Leninist plan for building socialism. The elaboration of the First Five-Year Plan for economic development and its final adoption in 1929 constituted a milestone of world-wide significance.

The First Five-Year Plan was a particularly important factor in the implementation of the Leninist programme for building socialism in the Soviet Union. In economic history it was the first comprehensive plan providing scientific substantiation for the rates and scale of a country's economic and social development. Since then the planned economic system began to reflect the fundamental advantages of socialism as a new social order. The epoch-making importance of the First Five-Year Plan can also be traced to the fact that "it laid the foundation for the adoption of five-year targets as the basic framework for planning the economy, and made these targets an important driving force behind communist creative achievement, demonstrating in practice the superiority of socialist methods for running the economy over the capitalist ones".²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 248.

² The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the Fiftieth Anniversary for the First Five-Year Plan for Economic Development", published in *Pravda*, March 18, 1979.

The planned system of the economy made it possible to concentrate in the hands of the socialist state the greater part of the national income and use it in order to carry out the most vital and urgent tasks, and to pay heed in economic practice to the most progressive trends in world science and technology so that the achievements of scientific and technical progress might be utilised and industrialisation implemented at a stable high speed.

The Party guided the creative activity of millions of working people over the whole country, at every plant, every construction site and spurred on these men and women to involve themselves in the selfless struggle to accelerate the rate of socialist construction and to fulfil the norms laid down in the five-year plans ahead of schedule. A mighty tide of working people moved out to the construction sites for the country's major new industrial projects in response to the Party's appeal. At the time the Soviet writer Boris Gorbatov described the scene in the following words: "An incessant whirl of wheels filled our ears in those years. Everything was in transit, on the move, nothing stood still: everyone was going somewhere by road, rail, water or even trudging on foot. A railway carriage in a wilderness made do for a station, a tent for a home, a cluster of dug-outs for a town.... These were days of great upheavals, sometimes painful, sometimes joyful, and days of great exploits."¹

From this industrialisation drive there stemmed a dramatic increase in the social and political power of the working class, progressive changes in its structure and composition, the swelling of its ranks, a significant improvement in the cultural and technical grounding of the workers' skills, in their creative activity and in their standard of living.

A logical result of this increased influence of the working class was its involvement in the running of the state. With each successive election the active involvement of the electors increased and the proportion of workers in the Soviets grew. In 1927, there were 52,100 worker deputies to the 986 town Soviets (comprising 47.9 per cent of the total), of whom 41,500 (or 38.1 per cent) were workers from the shop-floor, whereas by 1931 78,800 (or 56.5 per cent) of the total were worker deputies to the 963 town Soviets, of whom 58,600 (or 42 per cent) were workers from the shop-floor. The proportion of delegates to provincial, regional, territory, republican and all-Union congresses of Soviets from the ranks of the working class was also growing: for example, of the 1,576 voting delegates to the 6th All-Union Congress of Soviets (1931) workers accounted for 858, or 54.4 per cent.²

¹ Boris Gorbatov, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1955, p. 13 (in Russian)

² *The Working Class in the Running of the State (1926-1937)*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 75-76 (in Russian).

Steps were also underway to consolidate the workers' nucleus in the upper echelons of state power. In the early 1930s wide use was made of the system of holding two or more offices, i.e., the direct involvement of men and women sent by their work teams to participate in the activities of the People's Commissariats and other bodies within the central state apparatus. The trade unions, the most massive organisation of the working people, also played an active part in the industrialisation drive. They were restructured in order to enhance their role in improving the workers' material living standards, in raising labour productivity and in developing the creative activity of the working class. The 16th Congress of the CPSU (1930) adopted a resolution which clearly outlined the tasks of the trade unions in the reconstruction of the economy, the improvement of workers' living standards and conditions, the general and political education of the masses, and the consolidation of solidarity between the Soviet working class and the working class in the capitalist and colonial countries.

In order to strengthen the Central Council of Trade Unions, the Central Committee of the CPSU (Bolsheviks) sent a group of experienced party workers to join the Council's administrative staff. Over one and a half million industrial workers were drawn into the work of leading trade union bodies.

In 1933, the functions of the disbanded People's Commissariat for Labour were handed over to the trade unions: this meant that they were now responsible for all the funds of social insurance and their use, for labour protection and also for the network of sanatoria and holiday homes of all-Union importance. From now on the trade unions exercised all the rights of the grass-roots bodies of the workers' and peasants' inspection in factories, including the right of control over the supply of workers with foodstuffs and consumer goods, the regulation of wages and the provision of housing and medical treatment for workers and the right of combating embezzlement and misappropriation.¹ As a result of the changes the trade unions were to exert an influence on the development of the economy not only through state bodies but also through the direct exercise of a number of administrative functions.

The direct involvement of the working class in the running of production was growing apace. One of the forms in which this involvement found expression was the production conferences which emerged as far back as the early 1920s. With reference to their role it was pointed out at the 14th Party Congress: "The best way of involving the broad mass of workers in the practical tasks of building the

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 4, Book 2, Moscow, 1971, pp. 289-90 (in Russian).

Soviet economy, enabling them to appreciate the close links between the interests of the working people and the extent of economic successes achieved by the socialist state, and of bringing forward and training new economic executives and managers from the ranks of the workers, is the production conferences held in factories, plants and other major industrial enterprises."¹

Production conferences discussed and resolved questions relating to the organisation of production and labour, the material supply of factories, etc. Factory-based displays of efficiency proposals were held to increase industrial effectiveness, boost production and to keep down costs, while improving the quality of output and also the working conditions and living standards of the work-force.

The number of workers involved in production conferences grew steadily. While at the end of 1925 approximately 10 per cent of workers attended them, in the second half of 1928 this figure rose to 26.7 per cent and at the end of the first five-year plan period 70 per cent of the workers were taking part in production conferences.² Production conferences made a major contribution towards the raising of productivity levels.

Involved as they were now in the resolution of a wide range of problems connected with the organisation of production, the workers gained experience in the management of industrial enterprises. This development in its turn enabled the most talented among them to be promoted for posts in economic management. The production conferences in the Urals, for example, nominated 1,780 workers in 1928 for posts in industrial management, 2,716 in 1929, and 4,220 in 1930 from among their members.³

The development of the democratic foundations of economic management went hand in hand with the consolidation of the principle of one-man management⁴ in production. The resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on September 5, 1929 and entitled "Measures Designed to Regulate the Management of Production and to Establish One-man Management" played an important part in work to this end. It stated: "The implementation of Party directives relating to the one-man management principle in factories at a time when the growing

¹ *The CPSU in the Resolutions...*, Vol. 3, p. 270.

² I. E. Vorozheikin, S. L. Senyavsky, *The Working Class as the Leading Force of Soviet Society*, Moscow, 1977, p. 195 (in Russian).

³ M. Voskresenskaya, L. Novosyolov, *Production Conferences: a School of Management (1921-1965)*, Moscow, 1965, p. 51 (in Russian).

⁴ One-man management: the principle on which all state enterprises, institutions and government departments are organised. It requires that a single person be responsible for management and at the same time should administer the organisation in a democratic way by consulting his colleagues before taking important decisions.—*Ed.*

involvement of workers in the management of production assumed organised forms must be linked as closely as possible to the further development of creative activity and initiative of the masses in the context of the organisation and management of production."¹

The management was duty-bound to develop the creative activity and initiative of the workers and involve them in running factories. This meant the practical realisation of the task outlined by Lenin as follows: "We must learn to combine the 'public meeting' democracy of the working people—turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood—with *iron* discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work."²

The work of the Party, which combined leadership in economic construction with the encouragement of a committed socialist labour discipline, the planning of production in the interests of society as a whole and the extension of socialist democracy—these were practical methods for economic management, for raising the working masses' consciousness and for making the latter a powerful social force.

A convincing demonstration of the successful resolution of the tasks involved in the socialist organisation of social labour was the development of socialist emulation among working people, which gave rise to unprecedented labour heroism on a truly mass scale.

The founders of scientific communism had associated this kind of competition with collective work and cooperation in production. Karl Marx wrote: "...Mere social contact begets in most industries an emulation and a stimulation of the animal spirits that heighten the efficiency of each individual workman"³.

However the capitalist order based on exploitation and private appropriation stifles competition. Under capitalism competition becomes rivalry, which as Lenin wrote: "... means the incredibly brutal suppression of the enterprise, energy and bold initiative of the *mass* of the population, of its overwhelming majority, of ninety-nine out of every hundred toilers...."⁴

Fundamentally different relations take shape in socialist society. "Far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abun-

¹ *The CPSU in the Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1970, p. 311.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 271.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 309.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1977, p. 404.

dant among the people, whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions."¹

After the October Revolution the first shoots of socialist emulation began to emerge in a variety of forms: through selfless labour in the production of weapons essential for the defence of the revolution; through the establishment of revolutionary order and discipline in industrial plants and factories; through communist subbotniks,² termed by Lenin as "a great beginning".

As the industrialisation drive began the most widespread form of emulation was the shock workers' movement. The first shock brigades appeared in Soviet factories in 1926 thanks to an initiative of the Young Communist League (YCL). By 1929 brigades of shock workers had appeared in almost all large enterprises in Moscow, Leningrad and the Urals, in the Donets Basin and other industrial centres. The shock workers endeavoured to streamline the organisation of their working day, to raise productivity and tighten labour discipline. Whole workshops manned by shock workers appeared in many parts of the country.

On May 9, 1929 the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted a resolution entitled "On Socialist Emulation in Factories and Plants". It elaborated in concrete terms the principles for the organisation of emulation, as applicable to the conditions obtaining at the time of the socialist reconstruction of the Soviet economy, originally drawn up by Lenin. This resolution oriented those taking part in socialist emulation, Party branches, trade unions and the YCL on the execution of specific tasks: the fulfilment and overfulfilment of plans, the reduction of production costs, raising labour productivity, the consolidation of labour discipline, the encouragement of inventions by workers. The document pointed out the particular importance of initiative shown by workers themselves in the organisation of socialist emulation, and the subsequent development and consolidation of the achievements resulting from it, so as to avoid the risk of turning it into a superficial slogan. All manner of support was made available for workers' initiatives, and also for the propagation of the advanced experience of organising socialist emulation. It was suggested that new incentives of both a material kind (from a special fund for bonuses) and non-material kind (inclusion in red lists, the conferment of Diplomas of Honour and Red Challenge Banners, etc.) be introduced for the best enterprises and shops, collectives and individual workers.³

¹ Ibid.

² Subbotnik: a day's work done by workers on a voluntary basis as part of a drive to boost the economy. The subbotnik movement arose during the Civil War and the name derives from the date Saturday, April 12, 1919, when voluntary work was carried out by communist workers at a railway depot on the Moscow-Kazan line.—Ed.

³ *The CPSU in the Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 264-66.

At the end of 1929 the first All-Union Congress of Shock Brigades was held in Moscow, at which an appeal was made to the working class to fulfil the First Five-Year Plan in four years. In May 1930, organisations of comradely help were set up. They won wide support as a form of assistance rendered by foremost workers' collectives to those lagging. To mark the sixth anniversary of Lenin's death a Leninist appeal to the shock workers was announced. In July 1930, the workers from the Karl Marx plant in Leningrad, came forward with a proposal to draw up counter plans for industrial and financial development.

All these important steps made up the enormous contribution of the working class to the common cause, namely to the development of state industry and to the accumulation of money. "Counter-plan-ning" was to prove one of the most effective methods in the drive by the working class to fulfil and over-fulfil the Five-Year Plans, to utilise production reserves and economics. By the end of 1930 shock workers had constituted 56.3 per cent of the entire work-force, and by the beginning of 1932 the figure had risen to 64.2 per cent.¹

Socialist industrialisation began in difficult conditions. It was impeded by the stubborn resistance of class enemies both within the country and abroad. There was a shortage of modern technology, raw materials and food. Other legacies of the past that had not yet been eradicated at the time were unemployment, rural over-population, low levels of literacy affecting among others a large section of the industrial labour force. The activities of members of the opposition, many of whom occupied important posts in the Party and the state apparatus, also represented a major obstacle.

The enormous expansion of the industrial work-force mainly due to the exodus from the villages could not but result in a slackening of discipline in industry and a drop in the overall level of industrial skills, since the former peasants were not accustomed to the labour discipline of industry and had had no training in industrial skills. Certain miscalculations in the running of production also had a negative effect. For example, the switch to a shorter seven-hour working day in industry in a seven-day working week without proper preliminary organisation led to a drop in the personal responsibility of individual workers to use fixed assets and to wage-levelling, to a reduction in the workers' interest in the fruits of their labour and to the fluctuation of manpower. Bad housing and living conditions and irregular food supplies also gave rise to major difficulties. In order to put an end to these deficiencies the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) planned measures

¹ *The USSR for Fifteen Years. Economic Statistics*, Moscow, 1932, p. 243 (in Russian).

designed to streamline recruitment of the work-force and accelerate the mechanisation of production; to put a stop to the fluctuation of manpower; to ensure that work was properly organised and that workers' living conditions were improved; to eradicate wage-levelling and to ensure that it was in the interests of the individual worker to increase his output.

The effectiveness of these measures introduced by the Party was to a large extent determined by the fact that they were rooted in the creative enthusiasm of free workers. In those difficult conditions the feats of the shock workers appeared still more heroic. These were men who for the sake of the victory of socialism were prepared to strain themselves physically and mentally and this is why the shock workers' movement can with every justification be viewed as a heroic chapter in the history of socialist emulation.

Bourgeois economists, historians and philosophers went out of their way to denigrate socialist organisation of labour and to distort the essence of socialist emulation. They deliberately exaggerated the difficulties and shortcomings involved in the utilisation of manpower, presented the shock workers movement as a result of state intervention aimed at the intensification of labour by means of political and economic coercion. The favourite device employed by bourgeois ideologists and mass media was to laud capitalist competition and the notorious theory of man's unavoidably negative attitude to work in general. Reasoning of this kind encouraged the activities of underground anti-Soviet groups within the country.

Socialist emulation developed against the background of intense class struggle. In the late summer and autumn of 1929, statements were made by hostile elements at certain factories and plants in an attempt to make the backward workers reject socialist emulation. The working class gave a worthy rebuff to its class enemies. The workers from the Tula armouries wrote in a letter to the plenary session of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions: "In response to the ranting from the bourgeoisie and its vile attacks against the socialist emulation drive set in motion by the workers themselves we declare: we see this emulation not as a temporary drive but as a systematic framework for our labour. You may rest assured, gentlemen writers from the White Guard, that this emulation will not disappear from the pages of our newspapers, just as it will not disappear from our plants and factories."¹

Bourgeois theoreticians were unable and indeed unwilling to understand the wave of creative inspiration which gripped millions of working people and gave rise to "heroism in plain, everyday work",²

¹ *Pravda*, May 29, 1929.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 423.

which was to prove a most important factor in the building of socialism. The mass-scale involvement of workers in this socialist emulation drive and its rapid spread bore witness to the ever deeper socialist commitment among the working people. In the report drawn up by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to the 16th Party Congress it was pointed out: "The most remarkable aspect of this emulation is that it makes a complete turnabout in men's attitude to work, since it transforms work from a humiliating, heavy burden, as it was viewed previously, into a matter of *honour, glory, valour and heroism*."¹ The labour exploits of the working class led by the Communist Party underpinned the successful fulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan.

The completion of the First Five-Year Plan meant that a firm material foundation for the building of a socialist society had been provided. The schemes of imperialist reactionaries to bring the Land of Soviets to its knees through their economic stranglehold had been thwarted. The impressive achievements of the First Five-Year Plan appeared all the more outstanding in view of the fact that at exactly the same period the capitalist countries were in the throes of an economic crisis on an unprecedented scale that was to have catastrophic consequences. It was revealing to note that even the bourgeois press no longer had the temerity as before to refer to the Soviet Five-Year Plan as "phantasy" or "utopia". In August 1931, an International Congress on Economic Planning was held in Amsterdam. One of the main points on its agenda was the experience of economic planning in the USSR.

Having built the foundation of the socialist economy, the Soviet working class began to tackle new objectives. In the Second Five-Year Plan, the main targets for the development of the country's productive forces were as follows: the completion of the technological reconstruction of the economy, a further raising of productivity of social labour, a lowering of production costs, improvement in the range and quality of output. The fulfilment of the Second Five-Year Plan depended to a decisive degree on the ability of the working class to master the new technology and this in its turn made the task of raising the technical skills and educational level of the working class a top priority.

The Izotov movement was one of the first forms of socialist emulation which responded to this new need. A face-worker from a Donets mine Nikita Izotov who had taken charge of an unproductive section manned mainly by young workers who had come from villages, succeeded within a few months in fulfilling production quotas almost

¹ *The 16th Congress of the CPSU (Bolsheviks). Verbatim Report, Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, p. 39 (in Russian).*

twice over, after his pupils had mastered the new technology. This initiative by the Donets miner was quickly taken up elsewhere and the Izotov movement soon became a nation-wide phenomenon.

The mass involvement of workers in the movement of inventors and rationalisers¹ also played an important part towards helping the work-force master the new technology. The acquisition of creative technical skills by working people brought a good number of problems in its wake. The new movement was breaking new grounds in the struggle to combat the lack of faith shown by certain sections of the old intelligentsia with regard to the creative capacity of "ordinary workers". Bureaucratism and red-tape and at times even direct sabotage from counter-revolutionary elements also held back the development of the workers' creative initiative.

The Party, the state and the trade unions went to considerable lengths to propagâte the importance of workers' inventions and also to put into practice Lenin's decree entitled the Statute of the Council of People's Commissars on Inventions (1919).

Since 1927 the large factories set up special bureaus for the review of rationalisers' proposals, for the provision of expert opinion on such proposals and of technical assistance for worker-inventors. Large organisations thus came to replace scattered, purely local associations of inventors. In 1932, the All-Union Society of Inventors was set up to consolidate the nation-wide character of this movement of innovators.² In 1937, the society numbered 300,000 members, the bulk of whom were workers.³

Questions connected with the rational utilisation of the new technology and with the technical training of workers were widely discussed at special party conferences, and by the activists of town and factory meetings. When recalling the enthusiasm with which the workers approached their studies Academician Ivan Bardin, a leading Soviet metallurgist, wrote: "Tens of thousands of people reached out hungrily for knowledge, seeing it as wisdom, as a revelation that was suddenly opening their eyes to the world; they devoured books, studied formulae and problems as if they were a source of strength, showing them the way to victory, leading them to a happy, joyful life, full of meaning, interest and purposeful struggle."⁴

All earlier stages of the socialist emulation drive had helped pave the way for this new momentum. In the autumn of 1935, the Stakha-

¹ G. M. Alexeyev, *The Movement of Inventors and Rationalisers in the USSR. 1917-1977*, Moscow, 1977 (in Russian).

² I. E. Vorozheikin, S. L. Senyavsky, *The Working Class as the Leading Force of Soviet Society*, p. 212.

³ *From Capitalism to Socialism: Problems Central to the History of the Transition Period in the USSR. 1917-1937*, Vol. II, p. 173.

⁴ I. P. Bardin, *The Life of an Engineer*, Moscow, 1938, p. 193 in (Russian).

novite movement began. This new stage in the socialist emulation drive was set in motion by a team of workers and a Party organisation at the Central Irmino mine in the Donets region of the Ukraine. On the night of August 30, 1935 the face-worker Alexei Stakhanov, supported by timberers, managed after reorganising his work routine to mine 102 tons in the course of a single shift, which amounted to fourteen times the normal quota. The party committee at the mine, the press, the Donetsk regional party committee and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine (Bolsheviks) assessed this newly established record as politically most valuable and gave their active support to the innovator, calling upon other miners to emulate his example.

Within a short period the initiative of this advanced worker was taken up as a challenge by Party and trade union organisations, by the workers of many other mines and pits, factories and plants, railway depots and construction sites in all the republics of the Soviet Union. During the two months of 1935 (September and October) proposals for new methods for raising productivity were put forward in many branches of industry: by metal-smiths in the motor industry from the Gorky Motor Works, A. Busygin, S. Faustov and F. Velikzhanin; by machine-tool operators, represented by milling-machine operator I. Gudov from the Orjonikidze Plant in Moscow; by a turner N. Kuryanov from the carburettor plant in Kuibyshev. Other early pioneers in the Stakhanovite movement were the pulling-and-lasting machine operator N. Smetanin from the Leningrad shoe factory *Skorokhod*, weavers from the Nogin mill in Vichug, Ivanovo Region, Y. Vinogradova and M. Vinogradova. A train driver from the Slavyansk depot of the Donetsk railway, P. Krivonos was to initiate the Stakhanovite movement in the transport industry.¹

In November 1935, the First All-Union Conference for Stakhanovites was held, attended by 3,000 people.² It summed up the initial results of this movement of innovators, made public its great importance for accelerating the technical reconstruction of the Soviet economy, for the building of socialism.

This movement of innovators from the production line quickly spread throughout the country. In less than a year, between November 1935, and August 1936, the proportion of Stakhanovites within the work-force in the main branches of industry multiplied four-fold and in September 1936 the ranks of the Stakhanovites in Soviet industry as a whole had risen to 22 per cent of the whole work-force. In the next few years after that this movement of innovators from

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 4, Book 2, p. 377.

² *First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovite Workers and Women Workers. November 14-17, 1935. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1935 (in Russian).

the production line continued to grow. In 1938, the Stakhanovites accounted for 29.1 per cent of the industrial work-force and in 1940 for an incredible 33.7 per cent.¹

The Stakhanovite movement was a direct result of the victory of socialism. It marked "organisation of labour according to new principles, the rationalisation of technological processes, the correct distribution of labour in production, the freeing of skilled workers from auxiliary operations, better organisation of work benches, rapid growth of labour productivity and a significant increase in the wages of factory and office workers".² Socialist emulation played a tremendously important role in creating an atmosphere of inspired enthusiasm for labour and was transforming the attitudes and consciousness of working people.

The combination of the Party's efforts with the labour heroism of millions of working men and women provided the basis for the unprecedented successes in the achievement of the enormous objectives laid down in the early Five-Year Plans.

The most important achievement of the working class and its Party in the building of the economy was the creation of the material and technical base for socialism. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the Soviet people had carried out Lenin's great behest: in an incredibly short period the Russia of the period of New Economic Policy had been transformed into a socialist Russia. This historic task had been resolved thanks to the heroic labour of the Soviet people and above all of the working class and thanks to the correct policy of the Communist Party.

The building of Magnitogorsk, the Kuznetsk coalfield, the Ural-mash Plant, the Dnieper Hydro-Electric Power Station, the Turkestan-Siberian Railway, the Stalingrad Tractor Plant and the Gorky Motor Works and thousands of other enterprises and the mastering of new technology were all unforgettable landmarks on the path of socialist creation, bearing witness to the enthusiasm and real courage of Soviet men and women. In the Programme of the CPSU it was duly noted: "*The industrialisation of the U.S.S.R. was a great exploit performed by the working class and the people as a whole, for they spared no effort or means, and consciously made sacrifices to lift the country out of its backward state.*"³

During the years of the industrialisation drive the Soviet Union achieved such high rates of economic growth, the like of which no capitalist country had ever reached.

The high speed at which socialist industrialisation was imple-

¹ *Basic Trends Underlying the Construction of a Socialist Economy*, p. 159.

² *Directives on Economic Matters Issued by the CPSU and the Soviet Government*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 483 (in Russian).

³ *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 458.

mented could be explained by the advantages of socialism as the most progressive economic system. One of the main advantages of this system was the creation in the Soviet Union of the world's first planned economy. With the victory of socialist relations of production in the USSR the law of planned, proportional economic development took full effect. Certain bourgeois economists were obliged to acknowledge this. The British economist Alexander Baykov wrote: "The undisputably huge quantitative achievements of the U.S.S.R. in industry afford striking proof of the advantages of planned utilization of the country's existing material and labour resources and of planning its productive activities. Potentially, Russia possessed the same productive possibilities as the U.S.S.R.; the U.S.S.R., however, thanks to a planned utilization of existing potential productive resources in 12 years (1928-40), achieved results in the development of the national economy many times surpassing the results achieved by private enterprise."¹

During this period of socialist industrialisation the Soviet Union wiped out its technological and economic backwardness inherited from old Russia and completed in the main the technical reconstruction of the economy. In 1937, 80 per cent of industrial output was produced at factories that had been built or reconstructed in the course of the First and Second Five-Year Plan periods.²

As a result of socialist industrialisation the economy received a progressive structure. In 1937, industry, construction and transport accounted for 62 per cent of the national income as opposed to 43.3 per cent in 1913. Production of the means of production accounted for 61 per cent of industrial output in 1940.³ Engineering became a major branch of the economy. Several new industries also appeared on the scene: motor-car and aviation works, motor and turbine construction plants, machine-tool factories, almost all branches of the chemical industry, etc. Now that the technical reconstruction of the economy had been completed, the Armed Forces could also be rearmed and reorganised, a step which was to play a decisive role in consolidating the defence capacity of the world's first socialist state.

The rapid growth of the country's productive forces changed radically the balance between industry and agriculture. In 1937, industry accounted for close on 79 per cent of total production as opposed to a mere 42 per cent in 1913.⁴

An industry was created which from the technological point of view was on a par with those of the technologically and economically

¹ Alexander Baykov, *The Development of the Soviet Economic System*, Cambridge, 1946, p. 303.

² *Basic Trends Underlying the Construction of a Socialist Economy*, p. 259.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

advanced capitalist countries of Europe. The USSR became first industrial power in Europe and second in the world.

The borderlands of the country populated by national minorities that had in the past been backward were now being developed so as to bridge the gulf between them and central Russia. A decisive factor making possible the accelerated industrialisation of Kazakhstan and the republics of Central Asia and Transcaucasia was the aid—political, material and organisational—provided by central Russia and the industrial parts of the Ukraine. Despite major economic problems on the way, the working people from the central regions of the RSFSR and the Ukraine did not neglect their international duty and gave their disinterested help to the fraternal non-Russian peoples.

Thanks to the planned reallocation of economic resources to serve the interests of the backward territories a rapid advance of their economies was made possible. The direct result of the enormous investment in the industry of these lands was the extension of the technological basis for their industry. In the period 1927-1939, the fixed assets in the country's large-scale industry rose overall by 680 per cent, while the parallel figures for Central Asia was 1,850 per cent and for Kazakhstan 2,190 per cent.¹ In 1940, the output of large-scale industry in the Georgian and Armenian republics and in Kazakhstan exceeded the 1913 figure dozens of times over, and several hundred times in the case of Tajikistan and Kirghizia. Thus the policy of boosting the economies of the backward territories to bring them to the level of the industrially advanced parts of the country can be seen to have been implemented in practice. This experience of developing fraternal cooperation and mutual assistance between the Soviet republics clearly brings out the advantages of socialism, which does away with all forms of exploitation and national oppression and makes it possible to surmount economic backwardness with epoch-making speed.

In the course of industrialisation the working class was constantly bringing an ever greater influence to bear on the whole course of socialist construction, especially on the implementation of the hardest of the historic tasks involved, namely the *socialist restructuring of agriculture*. The need to collectivise peasant holdings stemmed from the very nature of socialist construction. The task of eliminating once and for all the exploiting classes as such could not be carried out without eliminating the kulaks as a class, the class which constituted the largest group of exploiters. Putting an end to the existence of this class also served to consolidate and broaden public support for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

¹ Ibid., pp. 316-17.

On the other hand, the predominance of the private sector in agriculture could not fail to give rise to an imbalance in the economy now run on socialist lines. By the middle of the 1920s an enormous gulf had emerged between the rates of industrial and agricultural development. In 1925/26, growth in agricultural output came to 19.2 per cent, while the respective figure for industry was 42.2 per cent, and the following year the figure for growth in agricultural output was 4.1 per cent and that for industrial growth was 18.2 per cent.¹

In agriculture, critical problems multiplied. The continued fragmentation of peasant holdings was making them less profitable. The fact that small individual holdings could not, in view of their very nature, be developed on a new technological basis meant that the peasant was condemned to a life of heavy manual labour of a kind that was far from productive. Not only general socio-political objectives but also the specific demands of the economy made it imperative for the Party and the working class to carry out Lenin's cooperative plan.

Lenin had pointed out that under the dictatorship of the proletariat cooperative farms would make compatible the interests of the individual peasants and those of society and that therefore cooperative agriculture represented for them the simplest, easiest and most straightforward form for the transition to socialism. Lenin stressed that the introduction of agricultural cooperatives would provide a school of practical experience that would serve to develop the skills of collective farming among the broad masses of the peasantry and would help to promote the close links between socialist industry and agriculture and to enable the urban population to chart the way ahead for the villagers. The cooperative farms were a crucial factor in the socialist reshaping of the rural areas, providing as it did a powerful instrument with which the working class was able to reorganise the economic, political and cultural life of the villages.²

Subsequent experience bore out fully Lenin's conclusion to the effect that mass-scale involvement of the working peasantry in socialist construction would take place with the gradual introduction of the basic principles of collectivisation by way of voluntary cooperation of peasant holdings. The Party and the Soviet Government devoted a good deal of attention to the development of the mass-scale cooperative movement. In 1927, at the beginning of the period of reconstruction, the simplest form of cooperation (consumer cooperatives), called upon to bridge the gap between the small peasant farms and the socialist industry numbered 9,800,000 shareholders,

¹ S. P. Trapeznikov, *Historical Experience of the CPSU in Carrying Out Lenin's Co-operative Plan*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1981, p. 47.

² V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, p. 468.

or 39 per cent of the peasant holdings.¹ Rural consumer societies squeezed out the capitalist elements in the retail trading network. The agricultural cooperatives played the crucial role in the transition of the peasants from cooperative trading to cooperative production. In 1927, over eight million holdings, or almost a third of the total, united into agricultural cooperatives.²

The speed at which the cooperative movement spread across the country gave grounds for hope that it would be possible to involve the bulk of the peasantry in organising socialist cooperatives. The socialist restructuring of rural areas had become practice rather than theory. The 15th Congress of the CPSU (Bolsheviks) held in December 1927, elaborated guidelines for extending the collectivisation of agriculture, starting out from Lenin's cooperative plan. The resolution on the subject adopted by the 15th Congress of the CPSU (Bolsheviks) read as follows: "In the present period the task of uniting and reorganising small individual peasant holdings into large collectives should be the *main task* of the Party in the rural areas."³ The class-orientated policy of the Party at that particular stage was to rally around the working class the bulk of the working peasantry, to isolate the kulaks and subsequently to eliminate them as a class, relying on the poor peasants and also drawing the middle peasants into the collective-farm movement in the course of the struggle to restructure the rural areas along socialist lines.

This policy for the collectivisation of agriculture met with bitter opposition from the kulaks—the largest of the exploiter classes—and this seriously exacerbated the class struggle in village communities.

The opposition group led by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky came out against the decisions adopted at the 15th Party Congress. While advocating the theory of "letting things drift" in social relations in the country, Bukharin denied the need for any massive effort aimed at restructuring agriculture along socialist lines. He maintained that the rural areas would follow spontaneously in the footsteps of the socialist towns and "merge" with socialism without any struggle against the kulaks or without any revolutionary transformations, simply thanks to the example provided by purchasing and marketing cooperatives. The joint Plenary Meeting of the Party's Central Committee and Central Control Commission, held in April 1929, rejected these ideas.⁴

¹ G. V. Sharapov, *The International Importance of the Experience Gleaned by the CPSU in the Socialist Reorganisation of Rural Areas*, Moscow, 1976, p. 66 (in Russian).

² *The Soviet Peasantry. An Outline History (1917-1970)*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 220, 222 (in Russian).

³ *The CPSU in the Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, p. 57.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-87.

Party, government, cooperative and Komsomol organisations launched wide-scale propaganda and organisational work, concerned as they were that collectivisation should be undertaken by the peasant masses themselves. Never before, as in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there were so many rallies, gatherings, meetings and talks in the villages.

At the end of 1929, the nation-wide collectivisation of agriculture began. In October-December of 1929, 2,400,000 peasant holdings and in January-February 1930, almost 10,000,000 holdings joined collective farms.¹ Despite widespread anti-Soviet agitation the kulaks did not succeed in persuading any sizeable group of the population to go over to their side: their counter-revolutionary activities were of a sporadic, localised nature and were quickly checked with the assistance of local activists who gave energetic support to the Soviet authorities. The resistance of the kulaks was broken by the joint efforts of the working class and the rural poor in close cooperation with the middle peasants.

Of crucial importance in the socialist restructuring of agriculture was the rapidly growing influence the working class exerted on the rural population through the work of the Communist Party, the Soviets and various mass organisations, through the state apparatus and also directly through representatives of these bodies in the villages.

Measures which served to raise the level of organisational and political work in the villages included the switching of rural Party organisations from a structure based on the territorial principle to the one based on the production principle, the broad involvement of collective-farm activists in the Party who constituted by the middle of 1931 60 per cent of the members of rural party branches,² and the development of party education on a mass scale. Peasant activists were now rallying to the party branches and affording them increasingly strong support. By the middle of 1930, in the RSFSR alone peasant Communists numbered close on 4,500,000.³

The rapid organisation of such branches of industry as tractor building and agricultural engineering made it possible to restructure the technological foundation for production on the collective and state farms. The wide network of machine and tractor stations (MTS) which had been growing since 1929 and developing on the basis

¹ N. A. Ivnitsky, *The Class Struggle in the Villages and the Elimination of the Kulaks as a Class (1929-1932)*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 247-60, 271-79; I. Y. Trifonov, *The Elimination of the Exploiter Classes in the USSR*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 296-310 (both in Russian).

² *The Soviet Peasantry. An Outline History (1917-1970)*, p. 294.

³ S. P. Trapeznikov, *Historical Experience of the CPSU in Carrying Out Lenin's Co-operative Plan*, Vol. II, p. 216.

of the original tractor columns, became a considerable factor in the socialisation of agricultural production, in the revolutionary restructuring of the whole system of socio-economic relations in rural areas.

The patronage exercised by the industrial towns in relation to the rural communities concentrated on the production sphere rather than on cultural and educational work. The growing participation by workers in sowing and harvesting drives, in the work of repair teams and other schemes served to strengthen the influence of the working class in the villages.

The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) that was held in November 1929 adopted a decision to send twenty five thousand workers with experience of organisational and political work to work in rural areas on a permanent basis. This undertaking by the leading class in Soviet society developed into a mass movement, into a nation-wide campaign aimed at helping the collective farms with trained proletarian personnel.¹

Experienced workers trained in foremost industrial skills predominated among those sent out to the villages. These were men possessed of advanced production skills, disciplined and well-organised, of whom the vast majority (over 70 per cent) were members of the Communist Party.² In the spring of 1930, workers from the twenty five thousand detachment were to be found on one of every five collective farms in the country.³

Another significant initiative of the industrial workers was the movement of volunteers to set off for areas of solid collectivisation in order to consolidate the rural Soviets. In view of the broad scale of this movement the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR decided on February 16, 1930, to send 7,200 of the most qualified and experienced members of town Soviets to occupy senior posts in the rural Soviets and district executive committees.⁴

All in all, approximately 25,000 people were sent from the towns to villages during the two and a half years of the collectivisation drive to carry out various types of economic and political tasks.⁵ Hand in hand with the Party and government organisations in the villages these envoys of the working class fostered in every way possible the organisational and economic initiative of the peasants who supported collectivisation, from whose ranks they nominated

¹ V. M. Selunskaya, *Twenty Five Thousand Workers in Rural Areas*, Moscow, 1964 (in Russian).

² Ibid., p. 59.

³ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴ Yu. S. Kukushkin, *Rural Soviets and the Class Struggle in the Villages (1921-1932)*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 239-40 (in Russian).

⁵ S. P. Trapeznikov, *Historical Experience of the CPSU in Carrying Out Lenin's Co-operative Plan*, Vol. II, p. 223.

and trained the peasants' leaders, helping them to calculate, plan and organise the work in their collectives and improve all aspects of agricultural production. The workers endeavoured to adapt the experience of socialist organisation of industrial labour to the needs of agriculture. As a result socialist emulation and the shock-workers' movement began to develop in the villages as well: help was given to those who lagged behind, while the finest teams as well as shock-workers in agricultural production were awarded special bonuses.

The experience of the Twenty-Five-Thousanders was taken into account when the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) organised political sections in the machine and tractor stations and on the state farms. The staff of the political sections carried out an enormous amount of work to extend and consolidate the network of Party and Komsomol organisations in the villages and to secure mass-scale support from non-Party members, to mobilise agricultural workers to join the struggle against hostile anti-social elements and finally to ensure that planned production targets were met.

Newly consolidated socialist industry was in a position to send to the villages men, well-trained in political and organisational work, and this to a large degree ensured the restructuring of Soviet agriculture.

By the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, over 99 per cent of peasant holdings had been incorporated into collective farms.¹ A new class had come into being—that of the collectivised peasantry. The largest and previously backward branch of the economy had now become forward-looking, and together with industry now constituted a homogeneous socio-economic foundation for a socialist society based on planned development.

After the completion of the collectivisation of agriculture, socialism had become a single, all-embracing system that underpinned the country's economy. Socialist ownership of the means of production in its two forms—public (state) ownership, on the one hand, and collective-farm-and-cooperative ownership, on the other—now provided the virtually ubiquitous economic foundation for Soviet society. In 1937, the socialist forms of economy in the USSR accounted for 99.6 per cent of the fixed production assets (not counting livestock) as opposed to 65.7 per cent in 1928, for 99.1 per cent of the national income (44 per cent in 1928), for 99.8 per cent of industrial output (82.4 per cent in 1928), for 98.5 per cent of gross agricultural output (including that from the individual plots of the collective farmers, factory and office workers) as against 3.3 per cent in 1928,

¹ M. A. Vyltsan, *The Final Stage in the Creation of a Collective-Farm System (1935-1937)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 66 (in Russian).

and for a 100 per cent of the retail turnover in shops and other outlets (76.4 per cent in 1928).¹

A crucially important stage in the history of the Land of Soviets and in that of the whole international labour movement had now been completed. After twenty years of the Soviet people's creative activity and with the vigorous support of the international working class a socialist society had in all its essentials been built in the Soviet Union. The period of the transition from capitalism to socialism that had been ushered in by the Great October Socialist Revolution had culminated in the victory of the new order.

During the building of socialism there had also been a transformation in the ideas and attitudes of the working man, the creator of the new society. The socialist relations of production which had now taken root, changing as they did the living standards for the population, provided conditions ripe for the radical reshaping of people's outlook on life, attitudes and moral principles, for the transformation of the masses formerly exploited by capitalism and downtrodden by poverty into free, properly educated and committed makers of history.

Yet tremendous effort on the part of the Communist Party and the working class it led were required in order to make the most of these undeniably favourable conditions for the implementation of the cultural revolution.

The *cultural revolution* began immediately after power had been assumed by the proletariat of Russia. Lenin wrote at the time: "After we had solved the problem of the greatest political revolution in history, other problems confronted us, cultural problems..."² When defining the tasks of the cultural revolution, Lenin stressed that it was essential to make use of all that was finest that had been achieved in material production and the country's cultural heritage so as to transform the legacy of culture, knowledge and technology, accumulated under capitalism, "from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism"³ and to ensure that the fruits of man's mind, of human genius formerly used as a means of oppression and violence should become a powerful force behind the revolutionary transformation of the world.⁴

The problems impeding the implementation of these grandiose plans lay primarily in the fact that for the first time in history power

¹ *Sixty Years of the Soviet Economy: Jubilee Statistical Yearbook*, Moscow, 1977, p. 9 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 72.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils. May 26, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 412.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 481.

had been taken by a class which was less educated than the class overthrown. It was pointed out in the Comintern Programme adopted in 1928: "The *bourgeois* revolution against feudalism presupposes that a new class has arisen in the bosom of feudal society that is culturally more advanced than the ruling class and is already a dominant factor in economic life. The *proletarian* revolution, however, develops under different conditions. Being economically exploited, politically oppressed and *culturally downtrodden under capitalism*, the working class transforms its own nature only in the course of the transition period, only *after it has won state power*, only by destroying the bourgeois monopoly of education and mastering all the sciences, and only after it has gained experience in the great work of construction."¹

After losing its political and later economic power in Russia, the society of the past continued to exert a considerable influence on social consciousness, on various aspects of the production, distribution and consumption of cultural values: this influence made itself felt particularly keenly in such spheres as science, education, literature, art and morals, thus impeding the liberation of all these spheres from the shackles of bourgeois ideology and holding back society's overall progress. These difficulties were complicated by the fact that the working class had had to begin building a socialist society with a level of development lower than that in the leading capitalist countries which already had developed industry and in which compulsory elementary education had already been introduced.

Now that the national economy had been rehabilitated and the transition to socialist industrialisation completed, the vital material foundation for the implementation of Lenin's plan for cultural advance had been provided. The 15th Party Congress listed as one of the priority objectives in the First Five-Year Plan a substantial improvement in the cultural level for the urban and rural masses and the advancement of the national cultures of the peoples of the USSR.

Success in the work on the cultural front had been made possible thanks to the leading role of the Party, armed with Marxist-Leninist theory, which had made its own all that was most valuable and progressive which had been accomplished in the course of men's cultural activities in the past and also thanks to the enthusiasm of the popular masses who had now been set in motion after they had been given the chance to realise their creative potential.

The main efforts of the Party and state were directed towards the elimination of illiteracy and partial literacy. A programme for the

¹ *Programme of the Communist International*, New York, s.a., pp. 51-52.

introduction of elementary education nation-wide was elaborated and subsequently implemented. In 1928/1929, twice as much money was allocated to education than in the previous year. In the first place schooling was given to children of workers, agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

Party and state bodies both at the centre and in the provinces relied on active support from the general public, drawing on the workers' cultural patronage over the villages, encouraging and developing all manner of forms of emulation between factories, machine and tractor stations, state farms, groups of teachers, anxious to make the campaign for literacy a cause of the whole people.

As the First Five-Year Plan period began, provision of extramural education for adults was substantially increased, this being a service of which tens of millions of people were to avail themselves in the years of all-out socialist construction. The compilation and mass-scale publication of teaching aids in the minority languages of the USSR was a step of importance for the spread of literacy among the non-Russian peoples. Many of these peoples were equipped with a written language for the first time ever. Dozens of different peoples were thus given the chance to learn in their own language.

By 1934 a system of nation-wide elementary education had been provided and a wide network of schools for partial or complete secondary education established. In the years 1933-1937, compulsory seven-year schooling was introduced in the towns and industrial settlements. Existing institutes, technical schools and courses were extended and new ones organised in order to train more teachers. In the early and middle of 1930s the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a number of resolutions that served to consolidate the organisational and academic foundations for Soviet schools. By 1939 illiteracy had for all intents and purposes been eliminated, since over 81 per cent of the population was now literate.

Thanks to the tireless effort of the Party which had made the universal education drive a cause supported by the whole people, genuinely democratic schooling had been provided. For the first time in history the working people had been guaranteed access to knowledge and culture thanks to their new position as masters of their country, and to the socio-economic and political development of their society.

Achievements in the sphere of public education facilitated the attainment of such goals as the moulding of the new socialist man, the training of a qualified work-force for the economy, scientific research, literature and art and eliminating the antithesis between manual and brain work, which had been inherited from the previous social order based on exploitation.

During the cultural revolution a new, Soviet intelligentsia came into being. The Communist Party made painstaking effort to draw those sections of the bourgeois intelligentsia still beset by vacillation into the ranks of those engaged in building the new society. An important role in the work to this end was played by the All-Union Association of Scientists and Technicians to Help Build Socialism, founded by a group of prominent members of the intelligentsia. In 1929, it numbered 546 members but by the end of 1932 its membership had risen to as many as 11,000.¹

An important source for the new intelligentsia, particularly in industry, was the mass-scale promotion of advanced workers and peasants who had manifested organisational talent. In 1926-1927, more than half those in charge of superior units in industry and three quarters of factory managers had been working recently on the production line.² As the years went by, the cultural revolution gained ground and the education system took firm root, the need for this kind of promotion of worker candidates for such posts ceased to be so strong, since specialists were now being trained in both specialised secondary and higher educational establishments.

The November 1929 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Party drew attention to the need to extend the network of special establishments (workers' faculties, schools and courses) designed to prepare workers and peasants for higher education or specialised courses in technical schools. In 1928-1932, young soldiers from the Red Army, young factory workers and collective farmers were mobilised on a mass scale and given special leave for study purposes.

These measures made an important contribution to the democratisation of the student body. In the academic year 1924/25 only 17.8 per cent of all students came from workers' families, while the corresponding figure for 1930/31 was 46.6 per cent.³ By this time the proportion of students in technical institutes from worker or peasant families was approaching 70 per cent, and in some cases had even reached 80-90 per cent.⁴ Technical higher and secondary education was reformed so as to bring technical higher and secondary schools closer to production.

The Party sent out considerable detachments of Communists to work as teachers and intensified the political education of teachers

¹ P. I. Kabanov, *The History of the Cultural Revolution in the USSR*, Moscow, 1971, p. 97 (in Russian).

² *The Soviet Intelligentsia. A Short Outline of History (1917-1975)*, Moscow, 1977, p. 57 (in Russian).

³ *The Economy of the USSR. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1932, p. 535 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Cultural Revolution in the USSR. 1917-1965*, Moscow, 1967, p. 147 (in Russian).

and students. In the autumn of 1930, Party branches and trade union bodies in higher educational establishments were reorganised, which led to closer links being forged between students, teachers, and technical personnel. The introduction of new social disciplines at the time—historical and dialectical materialism, political economy, and the fundamentals of Leninism—represented an important step forward.

During the first two Five-Year Plan periods over 500,000 specialists graduated from higher educational establishments, and of these the vast majority, between 80 and 90 per cent were the children of workers and peasants.¹ These establishments had thus become the main source from which the ranks of the Soviet intelligentsia were replenished. Fundamental changes were also being effected in scientific establishments. In the second half of the 1920s, the Academy of Sciences—the country's leading scientific establishment—was also reorganised. On the basis of Lenin's Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work the Academy was set new tasks so that its activities could be brought into conformity with the practical work of building socialism.²

In 1929, the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences was founded in Moscow, and during the 1930s further academic centres affiliated to this central Academy were set up in the national republics and in the country's main industrial centres, as were also research institutes covering particular fields in agricultural science.

There was also a marked increase in the network of establishments carrying out research projects in the field of Marxist social science.

The heroic labour of the working class, and of all working people in the USSR found expression in many works of Soviet literature and art. Many of these were recognised later as treasures of socialist culture.

By the end of the 1930s a socialist culture had been basically established, rooted in the firm foundation provided by the socialist economy. A new type of social consciousness had become dominant. It was characterised by such traits as collectivism, internationalism, patriotism, revolutionary humanism and historical optimism.

The elitism and class limitations of bourgeois culture, which directly or indirectly provides justification for the system of oppression and exploitation, was challenged by socialism, which highlighted the truly popular approach in literature and art and communist

¹ N. M. Katuntseva, *Soviet Experience in Training the Intelligentsia from among the Workers and Peasants*, Moscow, 1977, p. 69 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1977, pp. 320, 321; *Statutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 120-40 (in Russian).

partisanship in socialist culture, its commitment to the great goal of liberating and ennobling men's minds.

One of the major achievements of socialism was the creation in the Soviet Union of a culture that was national in form and socialist in content. For the first time in history the nations and nationalities, linked together in the Soviet fraternal family of peoples, were given the chance freely to develop their own cultures and to enrich each other's within the framework of a single socialist state. All working people, all nations and nationalities in the Land of Soviets adopted the ideology of scientific communism and became directly involved in the process of cultural and historical advancement.

The creation of a new society in the USSR had demonstrated in practice that the conscious activity of the working people inspired by the lofty ideals of socialism was an inalienable feature of the new system, a form of its existence and advance.

Socialist culture emerged on to the international arena not merely as an heir to the finest traditions of world culture, but also as a continuer of its great work in the future. Its historic importance with universal implications was recognised by people throughout the world. The well-known communist historian and writer from France, Jean Fréville, pointed out that Soviet men and women, after breaking the chains of capitalism, "are fulfilling the great historic mission of saving world culture".¹ The progressive American scientist Pat Sloan wrote while assessing the role of Soviet culture: "We find an art for the first time striving to embrace the whole of working humanity."²

The cultural revolution in the Soviet Union which had transformed the attitudes and aspirations of the people gave it new strength for further great exploits and provided a firm guarantee of its future successes and victories.

THE NEW APPEARANCE OF SOVIET SOCIETY

With the completion of the transition period the main aim of socialism was achieved—the exploitation of man by man was eliminated once and for all and all members of society became working people. The Soviet people underwent a profound transformation.

The *ruling working class* now looked very different. During the period of the first two Five-Year Plan periods there had been an abrupt rise in its numbers. While in 1928 the Soviet economy counted 6,800,000 workers, in 1937 this figure rose to 17,200,000, which

¹ Quoted from *The Cultural Revolution in the USSR and the Intellectual Advance of Soviet Society*, Syerdlovsk, 1974, p. 77 (in Russian).

² *New World Review*, April 1946, p. 32.

meant that in nine years the size of the working class had grown by over 150 per cent.¹

The concentration of workers in large factories also increased. At the end of the same ten-year period, almost 63 per cent of those employed in industry were working in plants with a work-force of a thousand or more, and 25.9 per cent of Soviet workers were working in giant outfits employing between 5,001 and 10,000 or more.² Now that the country had been transformed from "the home of calico" into "the home of metal" the metal workers became the largest detachment within the Soviet working class. In 1937, they constituted 28.3 per cent of the country's industrial workers as against 14 per cent in 1928.³

The geographical distribution of the labour force changed thanks to the rapid growth of the working class in the formerly backward borderlands inhabited by national minorities. An idea of the number of workers in large-scale industry per thousand of the population in the USSR as a whole and in the Union republics individually is provided in the following table:

Table 1

| Republics | Number of workers per 1,000 of the population | | | Increase between 1926 and 1939 (times) | Republics | Number of workers per 1,000 of the population | | | Increase between 1926 and 1939 (times) |
|--------------------------|---|------|------|--|---------------------------|---|------|------|--|
| | 1926 | 1933 | 1939 | | | 1926 | 1933 | 1939 | |
| USSR | 16.1 | 28.0 | 64.5 | 4.0 | Uzbekistan and Tajikistan | 2.4 | 7.1 | 22.2 | 9.3 |
| Ukraine | 18.5 | 33.3 | 65.2 | 3.5 | Turkmenia | 2.4 | 8.2 | 30.6 | 12.8 |
| Byelorussia | 5.5 | 15.5 | 50.0 | 9.1 | Kirghizia | 0.8 | * | 21.6 | 27.0 |
| Transcaucasian Republics | 10.5 | 15.7 | 32.2 | 3.1 | Kazakhstan | 1.7 | * | 31.3 | 18.4 |

Source: Yu. V. Vorobyov, *Closing the Gap in Levels of Economic Development in the Union Republics*, Moscow, 1965, p. 139 (in Russian).

* No figures available.

Although in the first post-revolutionary years some of the peoples inhabiting the former national borderlands had been living at a feudal stage of development and in some areas society had been run according to patriarchal or clan patterns, by the end of the Second Five Year Plan period the variety of socio-economic structures had been

¹ *The Economy of the USSR. Statistical Returns*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 189-90 (in Russian).

² *Labour in the USSR. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1933, p. 73 (in Russian).

³ *Industry in the USSR. Statistical Returns*, Moscow, 1957, p. 24 (in Russian).

eliminated in all Soviet republics, and socialist relations of production had come to dominate. The national republics had been transformed into economically advanced areas of the country with a modern industry and large-scale socialist farms. Particularly important for the development of these new, socialist nations had been the shaping of a working class from the ranks of the indigenous population.

The educational level and technical skills of the working class had also changed beyond recognition. The Soviet state had inherited from pre-revolutionary Russia a work-force with a very low level of education. According to the official census for 1918, 36 per cent of all the workers were illiterate. By the end of the transition period illiteracy among the workers had been almost a thing of the past. The level of general education received by the working class had also improved dramatically. The scale of vocational training was being steadily increased.

The organisation and socialist consciousness of the working class improved beyond recognition, as did its level of political activity and productivity. In 1936, more than 83 per cent of factory, office and professional workers were members of trade unions. The progressive sectors of the working class were united into the Communist Party, the highest form of working-class organisation. In the mid-1930s one worker in ten was already a member of the Communist Party.¹

It took many years of effort by the Party, state and social organisations to transform the proletariat into a socialist working class. With reference to the tasks involved in the ideological and political education of the working class, Lenin pointed out in 1919 that the working class still "has preserved a good deal of the traditional mentality of capitalist society. The workers are building a new society without themselves having become new people, or cleansed of the filth of the old world; they are still standing up to their knees in that filth. We can only dream of clearing the filth away. It would be utterly utopian to think this could be done all at once."² The struggle to overcome all vestiges of capitalism in the attitudes of the working class, above all its more backward strata, required the whole of the transition period.

While setting itself free from outdated attitudes incompatible with the position of the working class in a new, socialist society, the working class retained, developed and fostered such traits of pro-

¹ V. E. Poletaev, S. L. Senyavsky, *The Working Class—the Leading Force in the Building of Socialism and Communism*, Moscow, 1972, p. 30 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress January 20, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, pp. 424-25.

letarian consciousness as revolutionary spirit, hatred for all forms of exploitation and injustice, unswerving resolution and steadfastness, a high level of organisation and discipline and dedication to the goal of reshaping the world along socialist lines.

These new features of the Soviet working class came most clearly of all to the fore in attitudes to work and public property, in the manifestation of conscientious labour discipline, in the elaboration of new moral standards that shaped the obligations of the individual as a member of socialist society. Progressive workers became active and dedicated builders of socialist society, who proved themselves to be politically mature, possessed of adequate education and technical skills and anxious to combine work in production with wide-ranging socio-political activities.

Occupying as it did the key positions in the sphere of material production and throughout the system of society's political organisation, the Soviet working class during the period of socialist construction went out of its way more and more to bring its influence to bear upon the socio-political and labour activity of the other classes and social groups, upon their ideological and moral outlook. By force of example and the traits and qualities that it had been seeking to develop within itself during the course of socialist construction under the leadership of the Communist Party—its vanguard—which organised and channelled its activities, the working class helped to foster in other working people a sense of responsibility for the situation in each work collective and in society as a whole. This served radically to change the attitudes and moral principles of the working people.

The affirmation of proletarian internationalism as the fundamental principle underlying the behaviour of the Soviet working class enabled it to a large extent to consolidate its position as a forward detachment of the international labour movement, as indeed also of the forces of democracy and social progress.

Under the impact of the socio-political and economic factors of socialism the social nature and attitudes of the *peasantry* also changed. The class stratification in rural areas had been eliminated and a socially homogeneous collective-farm peasantry had emerged, which was working large agricultural units. With the completion of collectivisation a single economic foundation in the form of public (state) and cooperative-and-collective-farm property was laid for the political alliance of workers and peasants.

During the years of socialist construction a new, *Soviet intelligentsia* came on to the scene. In the period 1928-1937, there graduated from Soviet higher educational establishments a total of 568,600 specialists ready to take up their place in the national economy. The number of men engaged at that time in scientific research came to

80,000 as against a mere 11,600 in pre-revolutionary Russia.¹ The vast majority of the Soviet intelligentsia came from families of the working people. Their socialist consciousness and commitment to the new state were unshakeable. Grigori Orjonikidze wrote on this subject: "In our country an engineer is a great creator, who works for the workers in his country, who is himself a worker, and who works for the collectivised peasantry of his country being a collective farmer himself."²

The working class played the leading part in effecting this radical change in the class structure of society. After assuming state power it had used this to eliminate the exploiting classes and those factors which had given rise to the exploitation of man by man, and to transform, in keeping with a spirit of socialism, the working peasantry and all other non-proletarian strata of the working people.

The thorough-going transformation of class relations in the transition period put an end to the disunity of people which had been inevitable under capitalism. It also made it possible to create a true community of the fundamental interests of the whole people.

Closer ties between Soviet nations and nationalities also proceeded apace thanks to the surmounting of their economic and cultural inequalities. The peoples of the former borderlands were also involved in the general process of socialist transformations.

While Marxism-Leninism was taking root as a dominant ideology a socialist culture shared by all was taking shape. Marxist-Leninist ideology that gave expression to the socialist interests and communist ideals of the working class, provided the core of rapprochement between all classes and social groups, nations and nationalities.

A new community of men, unlike any known to history before, had virtually taken shape: the feature which distinguished the relationships within this community was the socio-political unity of all the members of the society, a unity which was growing ever more profound.

On December 5, 1936 the 8th All-Union Congress of Soviets adopted a new Constitution of the USSR, which provided legislative consolidation for the victory of socialism. In accordance with the level of social development now achieved the Constitution proclaimed that a socialist economy and socialist property in the instruments and means of production formed the economic basis of the USSR. The Constitution also recorded the unchallenged sway of the social ownership of the means of production, the elimination of exploitation and the exploiting classes, and the implementation of the crucial principle of socialism: "From each according to his ability to each according to his work."

¹ *Sixty Years of the Soviet Economy*, p. 141.

² G. K. Orjonikidze, *Articles and Speeches*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 659 (in Russian).

It was also laid down in the Constitution that the political basis for the Soviet Union was provided by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies, which had grown in stature and strength as a result of the overthrow of the power of the landowners and capitalists and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Constitution of 1936 can thus be seen to have made clear that Soviet society had achieved social unity as the result of the successful building of socialism. It was also stressed in this Constitution that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was a socialist state of workers and peasants.

The 1936 Constitution proclaimed that the supreme representative organ of state power was the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The victory of socialism had done away with the need for curtailed civil rights, such as had existed for some non-working elements in the transition period. After lifting the last traces of these restrictions with regard to elections to the Soviets, the 1936 Constitution replaced multistage elections by universal, direct and equal suffrage with secret ballot for the elections to all the Soviets of Working People's Deputies.

The fruitful results stemming from the implementation of Lenin's nationalities policy were also reflected in the 1936 Constitution: the essential principles underlying this policy were socialist internationalism, equal rights for all regardless of race or nationality, fraternal friendship and cooperation between all the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The 1936 Constitution guaranteed citizens the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of conscience, freedom of association in various mass organisations, personal inviolability and privacy of correspondence. At the same time the Constitution of the USSR started out from the principle that rights and duties should be viewed as a single whole, based on the compatibility of personal and social interests under socialism. While guaranteeing Soviet citizens their rights, the Constitution at the same time demanded that they abide by the laws and other duties designed to defend and uphold the socialist system. Soviet society had been built up as a society in which there were no rights without duties, and no duties without rights.

The recording in the Constitution of the working people's socioeconomic rights was crucially important: the right to work, to rest and leisure, to education, to material security in old age, equal rights for women and men in all spheres of the economy, state affairs, culture and socio-political life.

Many of the rights and freedoms written into the Soviet Constitution are also to be found in bourgeois constitutions. However, in the socialist state these rights and freedoms have a different class and political content. The 1936 Constitution was distinguished by

its very democratic implications, for after doing away with all political restrictions it laid down for the first time in the history of the state's legal practice completely equal rights for all citizens regardless of the class, nationality or creed to which they belonged. The most important feature of the Constitution, however, lay in the fact that the power of the working people and the elimination of exploitation which had put an end to the formal and limited character of the equalities found in bourgeois democracies paved the way for the development of the highest form of democracy—socialist democracy. It should also be pointed out that the victory of socialism considerably enriched the rights and freedoms that had been won through the October Revolution.

Although universal and equal suffrage is proclaimed in the constitutions of many bourgeois-democratic states, the majority of the population consisting of working men and women is held aside from participation in managing the affairs of state, since political power is in the hands of the bourgeois minority. Only in the Soviet Union democracy did not boil down to the granting of electoral rights to its citizens: instead democracy culminated in the establishment of the rule of the people. This meant that the universal suffrage laid down in the Constitution of 1936 was immeasurably more valuable to the people, for it simultaneously meant their participation in running the affairs of state.

The victory of socialism had created the essential material security for the socio-economic rights of the working people. Thus, after the elimination of unemployment in 1930, the Soviet Union became the first country in the world where man's basic right—the right to work—was ensured without any reservations. After the exploiting classes had been made a thing of the past by the end of the transition period, the complete elimination of exploitation had become reality. The surmounting of economic and cultural backwardness affecting the previously oppressed peoples lent a new quality to the equality of peoples, making of it plausible reality. Last but not least, the elimination of illiteracy and the cultural revolution had made it possible for every member of Soviet society to exercise his right to education.

The socio-political achievements of socialism, reflected in the Constitution, represented an important precondition for *the consolidation of the leading role of the working class and its Party in the new society*. Drawing on the recognition by the whole people of the role played by the Communist Party in the building of socialism, and on the increasing importance of the Party as a leading force in the new society, the 1936 Constitution recorded the leading role of the Communist Party in the Soviet state, pointing out that the most active and committed citizens from the ranks of the working

class and other strata of the working people, were uniting in the Communist Party, "...which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to consolidate and develop the socialist system and is constituting the leading nucleus of all organisations of the working people, both government and non-government organisations".¹

The first election to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR held on December 12, 1937 reflected the Soviet people's full support for the new order: 96.8 per cent of the electorate voted and of these 98 per cent voted for candidates nominated by the bloc of Communists and non-party members. Of those elected to the Soviet of the Union 45.3 per cent were workers, 23.7 per cent peasants and 31 per cent office workers and intellectuals. Of those elected to the Soviet of Nationalities 38 per cent were workers, 34 per cent peasants and 28 per cent office workers and members of the intelligentsia. In other words, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR represented the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and the moral and political unity of the Soviet people.

Former members of the working class headed major branches of state administration. In the first Supreme Soviet of the USSR elected after the introduction of the new Constitution, 42 per cent of the deputies were workers. Half the deputies to the town Soviets were workers, as were over half those in charge of top administrative bodies in industry and three quarters of all factory and plant directors.²

A good number of problems had to be overcome in the course of the development of Soviet society. Stalin's cult of personality was detrimental to the cause of socialist construction, as was the resulting infringement of the Leninist standards of public life and socialist democracy. At a time when socialism had already emerged victorious in the Soviet Union, the exploiting classes and their economic foundation had been eliminated, when the socio-political unity of the whole Soviet people had been achieved, Stalin put forward the erroneous tenet to the effect that during the further advance of the USSR along the socialist path the class struggle would intensify. In practice this mistaken tenet was used to justify the violations of socialist legality and mass repressions.³

However, these violations of the Leninist standards of party and state life, despite their grim consequences, could not change the very nature of socialist society or that of the ideological, political

¹ *Congresses of the Soviets of the USSR, of the Union and Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. Selected Documents, Vol. III (1922-1936)*, Moscow, 1960, p. 243 (in Russian).

² *From Capitalism to Socialism. Problems Central to the History of the Transition Period in the USSR. 1917-1937*, Vol. II, p. 174.

³ *Overcoming the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences: A Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1956, p. 16 (in Russian).

and organisational principles of the work of the Communist Party. Basically the Communist Party and the working class resolutely and unswervingly followed the course laid down by Lenin, who had stressed that Soviet power "gives those who were formerly oppressed the chance to straighten their backs and to an ever-increasing degree to take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands".¹ Only in a genuinely free society was it possible to achieve the unprecedented labour heroism shown by millions of men and women and without which it would have been unthinkable to put into practice the grandiose plans for socialist construction in such a brief historical period. All that time each victory in the building of socialism made its contribution to the advance of socialist democracy.

The building of socialism in the USSR was of *world-wide historic importance*. For the first time in history socialism had come into its own as a real system of social relations. It is stated in the CPSU Programme: "As a result of the devoted labour of the Soviet people and the theoretical and practical activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there exists in the world a socialist society that is a reality and a science of socialist construction that has been tested in practice. The highroad to socialism has been paved."²

In the course of socialist construction the theory formulated by the founders of Marxism in relation to socialism as a new type of the social system that represented the first, lower phase of the communist formation, was developed and taken further. On the basis of the experience of socialist construction important aspects of the theory of socialism were elaborated: these covered the building of socialism in one country, methods for providing the material and technical base for socialism and the collectivisation of agriculture, the cultural revolution, the solution of the national question, and the transition of the backward borderlands to socialism, bypassing capitalism.

The creation of the socialist society in the USSR bore out the profound correctness of the Marxist-Leninist tenet to the effect that the leading role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard—the Marxist-Leninist party—and the firm alliance of the working class with the non-proletarian working masses are essential for the victory of socialism.

Within what was historically speaking a short period of time the Soviet working class was able to train and educate itself to become the universally recognised leader of the new, socialist society. The experience of the Soviet Union demonstrated beyond doubt that

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 249.

² *The Road to Communism*, p. 463.

the working class was capable not only of destroying what was old and obsolete, but also of successfully creating something new and progressive, of administering society without the bourgeoisie.

The Soviet Five-Year Plans were not only plans for economic development, but sweep programmes for social progress. They enabled the socialist system of production to achieve its highest aim—that of satisfying as far as possible men's material and spiritual needs.

After the peoples from the former national borderlands, who at the time of the October Revolution had been living at a pre-capitalist stage of development, were drawn into the work of building socialism, the world revolutionary movement received a scientific theory of the transition to socialism and a real experience of it. Lenin's anticipation of the possibility for a number of peoples to make the transition to socialism, bypassing capitalism, was borne out completely by subsequent developments.

The political, social and economic achievements of the world's first state of the working people became a shining banner for the workers of the world in their struggle. In an appeal made by the Executive Committee of the Communist International "To Mark the Twentieth Anniversary of the Great October Revolution" it was proclaimed: "And now, workers of all countries, living Socialism stands before your eyes, clothed in flesh and blood! Living Socialism means the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. Living Socialism means the abolition of unemployment and poverty, means an uninterrupted rise in the material and cultural standards of the working masses... Living Socialism means the right to work, the right to leisure, the right to education—rights guaranteed to every citizen."¹

The impact of the achievements of the land of victorious socialism on world development was impossible to exaggerate, for it opened up new horizons for social progress. In this connection Dolores Ibárruri wrote: "Just as the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789 permeated all the bourgeois revolutions of the 19th century, although they were not identical in form to the French Revolution, so the spirit of revolutionary October 1917 lives in the political and social gains that the workers of all lands wrest from the bourgeoisie: it manifests itself in the instability, which today besets the world of imperialism and the monopolies."² The enormous moral and political authority enjoyed by the Soviet Union, its economic and defence capacity, were used as an effective means in the fight for peace, against imperialist policies of aggression, for the establishment

¹ *The Communist International*, Nos. 10-11-12, 1937, p. 1166.

² D. Ibárruri, "The October Revolution and the Struggle for Democracy and Socialism", *Great October and the World Revolutionary Process*, Moscow, 1967. pp. 76-77 (in Russian).

of equal rights in the relations between large and small peoples, as a mighty source of support for revolutionary and national liberation movements throughout the world.

The power of the example of creative change achieved by the Soviet socialist state that had set free the positive potential of the working class and all the working people provided revolutionary momentum that was to affect the whole course of world history. Socialism in one country never was and never remained socialism for one country. It went down in history as the most important achievement of the international labour movement, of all progressive forces. The victory of socialism in the USSR marked the beginning of the emergence of socialism as a world system destined to replace capitalism.

Chapter 2

THE MARCH TO SOCIALISM

The creation of a socialist society in the Soviet Union paved the way to socialism for the working people of the whole world, and no amount of effort on the part of the bourgeoisie could cancel out the enormous impact of socialist ideas on the class struggle in the capitalist world. The revolutionary inspiration of the first proletarian state made itself particularly keenly felt in the Baltic region which as a result of the anti-Soviet intervention had been cut off from Soviet Russia. The working class in the Baltic countries, who had taken part side by side with the Russian proletariat in establishing Soviet power, possessed tremendous revolutionary potential at a time when the bourgeoisie was pursuing reactionary policies, which demonstrated its inability to solve the urgent problems of social development. The exacerbation of all socio-political contradictions in the Baltic countries, the influence of the victory of socialism in the USSR, the impressive fighting efficiency of the working class, the decline in the bourgeoisie's moral and political authority all helped pave the way for socialist revolutions in this region.

The Soviet Union's neighbour in the southeast—the Mongolian People's Republic—orienting its policy on the experience of socialist construction in the USSR and with the support of the Soviet working class, embarked on a path of profound democratic change aimed at preparing the country for building socialism, bypassing the capitalist stage of development in the process.

Thus, the historic accomplishments of the Soviet working class helped the peoples of other countries to adopt the policy of building socialism.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS OF 1940 IN THE BALTIC REGION

The republics in the Eastern Baltic region—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—were the weakest links in the world capitalist system.

The bourgeoisie in the Baltic states had come to power after a grim

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struggle against the new social order as represented by the Soviets of revolutionary workers and peasants. After the Soviet republics in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had been abolished in 1919 with the help of foreign interventionist troops, the bourgeoisie in those countries at once showed itself to be an openly reactionary force working against the true interests of the people.

The severing of economic ties with Soviet Russia and the restructuring of the country's trade and economic relations turned the Baltic region virtually into an agrarian appendage of the imperialist powers, more dependent than ever on their aggressive, anti-Soviet policies.¹

The most advanced branches of production such as shipbuilding, mechanical engineering and the chemical industry, gradually fell into decline. It took bourgeois Latvia, the most industrially developed of the three Baltic countries, almost twenty years to regain the overall volume of industrial production that had been achieved in 1913.² The average workers' level of productivity in the Baltic region was several times lower than that in the major capitalist countries. Unemployment was still a major factor in that region even in the years when partial stabilisation of capitalism was achieved.

The bourgeoisie made extensive use of the threat of unemployment in order to keep down the working people's living standards and to curtail their rights: production quotas were increased while wages were frozen or reduced, provision for social insurance was cut and so on. On the other hand, the ruling elite, fearful lest social discontent should break out gave every support to mass-scale emigration, which enabled the government to hold down the level of unemployment and at the same time to get rid of revolutionary-minded workers. During the period of bourgeois rule from Lithuania alone close on a 100,000 people emigrated.³

The reorientation of the Baltic states' economies to meet the demands of Western markets affected the population distribution in those countries as well. Latvia and Estonia which had formerly been industrial rather than agrarian countries, were reverting to predominantly agrarian economies. The vast majority of the popula-

¹ "Germany and the Baltic Region", *The Fifth Interdepartmental Research Collection*, Riga, 1978; A. Varslavan, *British Capital in Bourgeois Latvia. 1920-1929*, Riga, 1972; V. Sipols, *Secret Diplomacy. Bourgeois Latvia in the Anti-Soviet Plans of the Imperialist Powers in 1919-1940*, Riga, 1968; O. Sepre, *The Dependence of Bourgeois Estonia on Imperialist Countries*, Tallinn, 1960 (all in Russian).

² *History of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic*, Riga, 1971, p. 538 (in Russian).

³ *The Socialist Revolutions of 1940 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Re-establishment of Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1978, p. 78 (in Russian); *Lietuvos TSR istorija*, Vol. 3, *Nuo 1917 iki 1940 metu*, Vilnius, 1965, p. 143.

tion (around 70 per cent in Latvia and Estonia and 80 per cent in Lithuania) were again being employed in agriculture. The largest class was the petty bourgeoisie consisting of middle peasants, artisans and small traders.¹

Despite the major losses it had incurred the working class continued to alarm the local bourgeoisie. It had behind it rich experience of class battles gleaned side by side with workers from all over Russia in the course of three revolutions and the struggle to consolidate Soviet power in the years 1917-1919. The vanguard of the working class countered the bourgeois policy of fanning private ownership mentality and national strife with the Marxist-Leninist ideas of the social liberation of the working people and the self-determination of nations. The communist parties, though driven underground, continued to pursue their activities. The broad mass of the people still had vivid memories of the social transformations effected by the Soviets in the Baltic Region during the period 1917-1919. The mere fact of the proximity of the world's first state of workers and peasants lent a specific character to the class struggle in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, inspiring the oppressed people and frightening the local bourgeoisie always fearful lest the popular masses should follow the example of the working people of the USSR.

The enormous army of the rural proletariat that numbered 150,000 in Estonia, 300,000 in Latvia and close on 200,000² in Lithuania had also amassed by this time considerable experience in class struggle.

In an effort to reduce the social tension in rural areas the ruling classes of these countries, under pressure from the popular masses, decided to implement agrarian reforms, however their implementation took a whole ten years. Large landed estates were divided, limits for quotas of inalienable holdings were laid down and a considerable section of the landless peasantry was granted land. For a time the bourgeoisie was then able to make social conflicts in the village less acute. However, while the reforms were still being implemented, their limited nature was already coming to the fore. Land was granted first and foremost to officers and soldiers in the bourgeois armies, to leaders of the nationalist organisations, to those who had taken part in the war against the Soviet Republic and only at the end of the line to the rural poor and to agricultural labourers. Only a few of those newly granted land were able to consolidate their position and join the ranks of the middle peasants. The majority of those granted land, however, swelled the ranks of the semi-proletariat

¹ Yu. Kirsh, *The Status of the Peasantry in the Baltic States and Their Struggle*, Moscow, 1933, p. 4; *The Socialist Revolutions of 1940 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia*, pp. 64-65 (both in Russian).

² Yu. Kirsh, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

or had to abandon their holdings altogether after once again becoming the victims of harsh exploitation.¹ The illusions which some of the peasants with very small holdings and the agricultural labourers had entertained at the beginning of the reform period were shattered once and for all, giving way instead to disillusionment and a profound hatred for the bourgeoisie.

The policy of social manoeuvring and nationalist demagoguery enabled the bourgeoisie to remain in power, but it could not do away with the class struggle which had assumed the form of acute political confrontation. The frequent changes of government testified to the weak economic and social support for the bourgeoisie, and to the instability of its political power. In these conditions it was not long before the ruling class showed authoritarian tendencies. In 1926, a fascist dictatorship was set up in Lithuania. Bourgeois-democratic regimes were still holding sway in Estonia and Latvia, but the working class and all democratic forces had to wage a tense struggle against subversive activities of the reactionary circles. After the onset of the world economic crisis the ruling circles in Estonia and Latvia also turned to fascism as a last resort for upholding bourgeois rule. On March 12, 1934 a fascist coup was effected in Estonia and on the night of May 15, 1934 the parliamentary regime was also abolished in Latvia.

The fascist regimes in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia proclaimed that their main aim was to "revitalise the economy" by means of state intervention in all its branches. In actual fact what this "revitalisation" really meant was a reactionary course of home policy, greater role of monopoly capital in the country's economy and open suppression of the masses' revolutionary movement.

The fascist dictatorships in the Baltic region which relied for their support on the upper strata of the urban and rural bourgeoisie, were unable to forge for themselves an indispensable social base either in the towns or in the rural areas in which the bulk of the working people was concentrated. This stood out most of all in Lithuania where by the mid-1930s class contradictions in the villages had become very tense. The peasant movement which began here with purely economic goals soon developed into a powerful anti-government and anti-fascist protest.²

The discontent rife among the widest circles in society at the abolition of bourgeois-democratic freedoms and the intensified endea-

¹ *Forty Years of the Baltic Republics in the USSR*. Summaries of Reports and Communications at the All-Union Scientific Conference devoted to the Revolutions of 1940 and to the Re-establishment of Soviet Power in the Baltic Republics of the USSR (July 1-2, 1980), Vilnius, 1980, p. 20 (in Russian).

² S. Atamukas, *The Communist Party of Lithuania in the Struggle for Soviet Power (1935-1940)*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 104-19 (in Russian).

your by workers and other working people to achieve unity of action in defence of their political and socio-economic rights led to major changes in the alignment of social and political forces in the Baltic states. The communist parties of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia which took an active part in the preparation and implementation of the decisions adopted at the 7th Comintern Congress achieved considerable success in the setting up of a united workers' and anti-fascist Popular Front.¹

In the autumn of 1934, an agreement was signed in Latvia between the Communist and Socialist Worker and Peasant parties to set up a common workers' front and to wage a joint struggle against fascism. In many factories, unity committees were set up, their activities being coordinated by their Central Committee, regional and district committees. Similar committees appeared in the trade unions and also to direct the fight waged by the rural proletariat. In the summer of 1936, the Communist and Socialist Youth Organisations amalgamated to form the Union of Working Youth in Latvia. This coordinated effort of the working class and other working people contributed to the growth of the strike movement. The strikers were more and more on the offensive to defend political rights as well as economic ones.²

Despite the resistance from the right-wing leadership of the Social Democratic Party, committees for a united workers' front were set up in Lithuania at the end of 1935: these consisted of Communists, Social Democrats and members of Christian workers associations in a number of branches of industry. In May, June and July of 1936 the strike movement found a new lease of life. In 1936, 24,000 workers took part in economic and political strikes in Lithuania.³

In January 1937, the programme of the anti-fascist Popular Front of Lithuania was made public, which had been duly approved by the Communist Party, the Komsomol and also by left-bourgeois public figures and Populists, the youth organisation that united Populists and Socialists, and by the anti-fascist groups of politically non-committed members of the intelligentsia. On March 23, 1939, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania appealed to the people to set up a broad-based front, capable of mobilising the country's patriotic forces to implement democratic reforms.

¹ A. K. Pankseyev, A. B. Libman, "Georgi Dimitrov and Certain Aspects of the Revolutionary Movement in the Baltic Region", *Georgi Dimitrov, An Outstanding Leninist Revolutionary*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

² *An Outline History of the Communist Party of Latvia*, Part 2, Riga, 1966, pp. 389-92; A. A. Drizul, *Latvia under the Yoke of Fascism*, Riga, 1960, pp. 176-85; A. A. Drizul, *An Outline History of the Labour Movement in Latvia (1920-1940)*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 135-50 (all in Russian).

³ *Kommunist*, (Vilnius), No. 1, 1977, p. 98.

Many of the strikes organised by the workers of Estonia called for a united front. These strikes were led on a joint basis by Communists, Left Socialists and non-party activists. In July 1935, Communists and representatives of the left wing of the former Estonian Socialist Workers' Party signed an agreement on joint action. This success in coordinating the activities of party and trade union organisations of the working class facilitated the strike movement. In 1935, there were twenty-five demonstrations by the working people demanding higher wages, in which 10,000 Estonian workers took part.¹

In October 1935, a Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party was held in Moscow to discuss problems connected with the establishment of an anti-fascist popular front. As noted in the decision issued at the end of the plenary meeting, the core of the popular front should consist of the Communist Party and Left Socialists, but it was essential that it should also involve other workers' organisations and also embrace new immigrants, the national centre and the organisations of the Russian ethnic minority.² The plenary meeting called on all these organisations to campaign for agrarian reform in accordance with which tens of thousands of poor peasants and farm labourers would be provided with plots as a result of the division of large landed estates and also of the state land reserve.

In 1936-1937, cooperation between the Tallinn Communists, Left Socialists and the left wing of the cultural association Licht (Light), which brought together progressive Jewish workers and intellectuals, became much closer.

On the whole, the fascist regimes in the Baltic countries made possible the extension of their rule by draining the moral and political resources of the bourgeoisie. After the Second World War began it became particularly clear that the orientation by the ruling circles in the Baltic countries on Nazi Germany became a threat to the very existence of these states and would lead to the enslavement of the Baltic peoples by aggressors. The revolutionary struggle of the working class was merging more and more with the nation-wide protest against this suicidal policy, therefore bringing nearer the time by which a revolutionary situation would have taken shape. The ruling circles were subjected to growing pressure from the working people, who were demanding closer ties with the Soviet Union. It should be pointed out that the patriotic members of the bourgeoisie had been also convinced by the rapid defeat of Poland and its Nazi

¹ The Central State Archives, of the October Revolution in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, folio 994, entry 1, file 23, sheets 68-69.

² *An Outline History of the Communist Party of Estonia*, Part 2, Tallinn, 1963, p. 317 (in Russian).

occupation that the Baltic countries on their own were not in a position to defend their freedom and independence in face of fascist aggression.

In the situation that had now developed the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were obliged to accept the proposals of the Soviet Union and to conclude in the autumn of 1939 pacts providing for mutual assistance, according to which the signatories took it upon themselves to afford each other all possible assistance, even military assistance should the need arise. So that the USSR might be in a position to provide real and effective help to the Baltic states it was given the right to station a set number of armed contingents on their territory.

The signing of these pacts did not put an end to the unpatriotic activities of the reactionary circles in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. There was a danger that nazi Germany might pull the Baltic countries into a war against the Soviet Union and that their peoples be enslaved by nazi invaders. At the same time the signing of these mutual assistance pacts gave new impetus to the nation-wide struggle against the unpatriotic and anti-Soviet schemes of the reactionaries: it helped further to reduce the social support for the ruling fascist cliques and accelerated their political isolation. Thus, on October 9, 1939, a meeting of workers' elders and trade union representatives from all over the city of Tallinn made an appeal in the name of the Estonian working people, demanding unequivocally that "in the spirit of the mutual assistance pact concluded between Estonia and the Soviet Union the working people of the two countries should in the future draw closer together".¹ In that same month representatives of the legal opposition won victories in the municipal elections in Tallinn, Tartu, Narva and other cities. Further elections to the State Duma in October 1939 and January 1940 produced similar results.² By the spring of 1940 the political situation in Estonia was extremely tense. Bourgeois leaders were obliged to concede that there could be felt in the air a "latent mass hostility to everything connected with state power and administration".³

A similar situation took shape in Latvia and Lithuania. The masses were well aware of the need for radical change and showed their readiness to engage in decisive revolutionary activity.

On May 1, 1940, despite reinforced police guards, red flags were hung up in many parts of Riga and leaflets were distributed calling for the overthrow of the fascist regime. In the large cities of Latvia

¹ Quoted from O. Kuuli, *The Revolutionary Summer of 1940 in Estonia*, Tallinn, 1979, p. 9 (in Russian).

² Ibid., pp. 11-12.

³ *Riigivolikogu stenograafilised aruanded, I koosseis, V ja VI istungjark. 1939/40*, Tallinn, 1940, p. 939.

strikes and workers' rallies were organised. In a description of the workers' mood in the spring of 1940, the Latvian secret police noted that "deep discontent is rife among them and they have begun openly to express their contempt for the existing state order in Latvia", that they sympathised with the USSR and were convinced that an imminent revolution was inevitable. At that same time the American envoy to Riga wrote to his government about the drastic increase in anti-government activity on the part of left-wing forces in Latvia.¹ In the spring of 1940 and early June of the same year in Kaunas, Vilnius, Panevezys and other towns in Lithuania, workers organised strikes in the course of which ever more frequent demands were made for the resignation of the government.

While the popular masses were expressing their reluctance to continue living as before in ever more strident terms, signs that the ruling elite was in the throes of crisis came ever more clearly to the fore: internal dissensions, bewilderment and confusion, a feverish search for ways of saving their own power. In Latvia and Lithuania some factions of the bourgeoisie were planning to carry out palace coups in the spring of 1940, hoping in this way to defuse the revolutionary situation. In Estonia where there still remained some opportunities for legal opposition, as early as the autumn of 1939 the ruling class decided to replace some of the more reprehensible figures in the dictatorial regime by politicians who had previously, albeit in a demagogic way, promised that reforms would be carried out.

By the summer of 1940 the split between the broad popular masses, on the one hand, and the fascist rulers, on the other, amounted to a *national crisis*. In these conditions the only organised and cohesive force able to put forward a positive solution to the outstanding problems were the communist parties in the countries concerned. In the documents adopted by them at the end of 1939 and in early 1940 were to be found clear precise programmes for the national and social salvation of these countries. The Communists were making it clear to the masses that the way out of this catastrophic situation should be sought not in a return to bourgeois-democratic ways, but in the establishment of people's democratic republics.

The communist parties exposed the fallacy that the then current situation was holding back the introduction of democratic freedoms, demonstrating that it was precisely the pact with the Soviet Union and its wholehearted implementation, which could make possible the democratisation of public life in the Baltic countries. While courageously combatting the wild outbursts of fascist reaction, the Communists led the struggle of the working class and other working

¹ *The Socialist Revolutions of 1940 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia*, p. 276.

people to achieve economic and political rights, and radically to restructure the whole of society.

Insofar as the ruling circles in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were violating the mutual assistance treaties signed with the USSR, the Soviet Government, in June 1940, brought up the question of the removal from government office in those countries of the persons who had impeded the conscientious observance of the treaties in practice and also the question of increasing the number of Soviet garrisons in the Baltic countries.¹ The proposals put forward by the USSR were accepted.

In Lithuania, the extra units of Soviet troops which arrived on the scene on June 15 were given an enthusiastic reception. Tens of thousands of people from Kaunas and other cities came out to demonstrate in support of them, greeting the fighting men as their defenders and true friends.² The dictator Smetona and his stooges fled to Germany. The next day saw mass rallies and demonstrations in response to an appeal from the Communists: those who took part in them demanded an end to the reactionary forces' activities directed against the people, an end to anti-Soviet provocations, a lifting of the ban on the Communists and trade unions, the formation of a new government which would protect the interests of the people. In Kaunas the demonstrators demanded that anti-fascists be immediately released from prison. In Panevezys the prison was taken by storm and the political prisoners freed.

These actions by the working people brought the work of the bourgeois state apparatus to a standstill. The ruling class could not resort to violence. The army had gone over to the side of the people and the presence of the Soviet troops made any foreign intervention impossible. In these conditions a new People's Government was formed directly involving the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania: it included many prominent public figures and was led by Justas Paleckis.³

In Latvia the reception of Soviet armed units developed into a mass demonstration by the people of their friendly attitude to the USSR and of their hatred for the fascist regime led by Karlis Ulmanis. In a telegram sent to London by the British envoy it was said that a considerable section of the population had met Soviet troops with shouts of welcome and flowers.⁴ The authorities sent out the mounted police and military units against the unarmed demonstrators. In Riga a state of siege was declared. Despite repressive meas-

¹ *History of Soviet Foreign Policy. 1917-1945*, Volume 1, Moscow, 1981, p. 390.

² *The Socialist Revolutions of 1940 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia*, p. 278.

³ V. O. Miller, *The Victory of Soviet Power in the Baltic Region in 1940*, Riga, 1964, pp. 1-8 (in Russian).

⁴ *Public Record Office*, F.O. 419/34, p. 272.

ures and arrests this tide of revolutionary feeling also swept through other cities of Latvia. In Liepāja demonstrators occupied the most important buildings in the town. De facto power came into the hands of the working people led by the city committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. Decisive action by the popular masses paved the way for the fall of the bourgeois government led by Ulmanis. On June 20, a People's Government under August Kirchenstein was formed. Enormous political demonstrations and rallies took place throughout the country that provided a striking illustration of the people's revolutionary activity and resolution.¹ In response to popular demand political detainees were freed from prison. The revolutionary movement spread to the peasantry and the army. With each day passing ever broader sections of the population joined in the struggle to build a new social order.²

In Estonia the Soviet diplomatic note sent on June 16, 1940 was the last impetus which led to an outburst of popular indignation against the treacherous, anti-national policies of the fascist-minded bourgeoisie. June 17 and the days that followed saw mass demonstrations demanding that a new government be set up to abide meticulously by the terms of the mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union and implement democratic reforms in all spheres of public affairs.³

The ruling class tried to prevent the popular masses from taking part in deciding the destiny of their country and postponed by every possible means the formation of a new government. Then in response to an appeal by the Communists the working people organised strikes and demonstrations in all Estonia's main cities on June 21. After a signal from factory sirens and hooters tens of thousands of workers downed tools and came out into the streets of Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Pärnu and other cities. More and more people came out to join the columns of workers marching with revolutionary banners of 1905 and 1917.

The demand by the workers for the overthrow of the fascist government was soon being insisted upon by the whole of the working people. "Down with the Government of War Provocations!", "We Demand a Government that Will Honestly Abide by the Mutual Assistance Pact with the USSR!", "Work, Bread and Freedom!" such were the main slogans used by the masses. In Tallinn the workers seized the police stations and the arms depots and took over the government headquarters. The first detachments of the People's Self-Defence

¹ A. A. Drizul, *An Outline History of the Labour Movement in Latvia (1920-1940)*, pp. 158-59.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

³ *Under the Banner of October (The Working People of Estonia in Their Struggle for Soviet Power. 1917-1940)*, Moscow, 1959, p. 190 (in Russian).

Force began to be organised. The Estonian proletariat in conjunction with the working peasantry and with all the democratic forces of society made sure the fascist section of the bourgeoisie was robbed of its support. These fascists, no longer able to have counter-revolutionary help from outside, were forced to give up political power without armed resistance, as had been the case in Lithuania and Latvia. On the evening of June 21, President Konstantin Pāts announced that a new government would be set up under the leadership of the well-known political leader Vares (Barbarus).

The creation of these people's governments opened the way for the gradual *disbandment of the organs of power of the bourgeois dictatorship, for the revolutionary transformation of all spheres of public life*. In declarations published by the new governments of Lithuania (June 17, 1940), Latvia (June 20) and Estonia (June 22) the main thrust of these changes was defined: to secure popular rule, rights and freedoms for the masses, to ensure improved living standards and levels of education for the masses, to set up organs of state power on the basis of truly democratic elections, to dissolve and eliminate all reactionary organisations, and finally to develop neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union.

These declarations were based on the proposals put forward by the communist parties, who were going out of their way to ensure that the work of the new governments should reflect as faithfully as possible the will of the popular masses. In the first few days of the revolutions the Communists of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia handed mandates to the people's governments that had been adopted by mass political rallies. These contained demands that the banks and industrial production should be placed under state control, that the army should be reorganised on democratic lines, that a workers' militia be set up, large landed estates confiscated and divided up among the landless peasants, that unemployment be brought to an end.¹

The revolutionary activity of the masses, the setting up of people's governments and their first steps to implement these programmes for reform, that had been made known to the population, ensured a rapid transfer of power into the hands of the working people both in the capital cities and elsewhere in the three countries. As early as June 1940 the working class, the driving force behind the revolution, was completely in charge of the situation.

Relying on the revolutionary resolve and active support of the masses, the people's governments that implemented the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat proceeded forthwith to put into

¹ *The Socialist Revolutions of 1940 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia*, pp. 321-22.

practice the recommendations put forward by the communist parties of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, effecting changes in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres. Particularly important for the development and consolidation of the socialist revolutions were the acts passed by the people's governments providing an amnesty for political prisoners and lifting the ban on communist parties; old trade union organisations also could come out into the open and new ones could be formed, as could other organisations of the working people, including those catering to the needs and interests of the younger generation.

Immediately after they had been elected the people's governments began to dismantle the fascist military and state machine, to reorganise certain sections of the state apparatus along democratic lines. The most reactionary elements in the army, police, ministries and other state institutions were dismissed: their places were taken by members of the anti-fascist and revolutionary movements—Communists, non-party democratic figures, trade union activists. Gradually the key posts in all areas of the state apparatus were assumed by Communists, progressive workers, peasants and intellectuals.¹

In Lithuania and Estonia the parliaments that had existed in the years of fascist rule were dissolved. The disbandment of the chambers, set up on the lines of Italian fascist corporations, was an important event in the political life of the country. Similar steps were taken with regard to the fascist parties and para-military organisations. The laws adopted by the people's governments with regard to the introduction to army units of political instructors played an important role in the democratisation of the armies of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In response to the demand by the working people the governments set about fundamentally reorganising the police and replacing it by a people's militia.

Changes wrought in the economic sphere were also extremely important. State representatives were appointed to inspect the activities of those managing private enterprises and establishments. State control over the activities of private capital paved the way to nationalisation of the basic means of production and the banks.

A number of important acts were taken by the masses themselves, acting under the leadership of the Communists, acts which were later to be given the force of law. These included the setting free of all political prisoners, the creation by the workers in Estonia of People's Self-Defence Force to ensure revolutionary order. It was on the initiative of the masses that groups of non-party activists or sympathisers were formed. These groups whose activities were guided by

¹ *An Outline of the Development of the State Systems in the Soviet Baltic Republics (1940-1965)*, Tallinn, 1965, p. 15 (in Russian).

party bodies or individual Communists were in practice the implementors of party policy in those places where there did not yet exist party branches.

The initiative of the masses also manifested itself in the creation of new organs of power in the localities. In some towns and rural districts of Latvia administrative and revolutionary committees or those of workers' deputies were in charge of the situation from the very first days of the revolution right to the end of July.¹ In Ventspils, for example, the administrative committee elected by the workers' assembly was in complete control of the city.

Workers' committees played an important role in state control over private capital. These committees were set up in factories and consisted of industrial and office workers. Although direct workers' control was maintained only for a short time it was of considerable importance for uninterrupted production, the maintenance of equipment and raw materials and the involvement of the working people in active political life, paving the way for the socialisation of the means of production.²

The rank and file in the bourgeois armies of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia played a prominent role in their democratisation and in turning them into people's armies. Soldiers' committees acted effectively after they had emerged in Estonia at the beginning of July.

The elections to the supreme representative bodies—the People's Sejms in Lithuania and Latvia and the State Duma in Estonia held on July 14-15, 1940, reflected the enormous political enthusiasm of the masses and their keen desire to carry the revolution further. The bourgeoisie who still retained their right to vote was roundly defeated in these elections. An absolute majority of over 90 per cent of those who cast their votes came out in favour of the candidates from the electoral blocs led by the communist parties in the countries concerned.³

This victory of candidates nominated by the working people clearly testified to the radical changes that had been effected in less than a month by the people's governments. The working class and its revolutionary vanguard now came to occupy the leading positions in all spheres of public life. This meant that the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry had now been significantly consolidated. The essential conditions for the re-establishment of

¹ E. Žagars, "Restoration of Soviet Power in Latvia in 1940", *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, No. 8 (277), Riga, 1970, pp. 3-29.

² *Common Regularities of the Great October Revolution and the Revolutions of the 1940s in the Countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, Summaries of Reports and Speeches*, Issue 2, Moscow, 1976, p. 42 (in Russian).

³ *An Outline of the Development of the State Systems in the Soviet Baltic Republics (1940-1965)*, p. 22.

Soviet power in the Baltic countries and for their transition to the building of socialism had now been created.

Even during the lead-up to the elections, voters had been requesting in their mandates to their candidates that they bring up the question of the re-establishment of Soviet power in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and reach a positive decision on the issue, and that a reunification with the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union be achieved and laws passed for the nationalisation of the land, banks, large trade and industrial enterprises.

At the first sittings of the People's Sejms of Lithuania and Latvia and of the State Duma of Estonia held between July 21 and 23, 1940, legislative acts were passed to proclaim Soviet power in the Baltic states, plenipotentiary commissions were elected to transmit to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the declarations concerning the accession of the Baltic republics to the USSR. At the beginning of August 1940 Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became part of the Soviet Union.

The events of July 21-23, 1940, brought to a successful conclusion the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Baltic countries. The declarations made by the supreme organs of state power in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the nationalisation of the banks, large-scale industry and the land laid the foundations for the creation of a socialist economy.

In the constitutions adopted by the Soviet Baltic republics in August 1940 it was proclaimed that their economies should be determined and directed in accordance with state economic plans. The achievement of this objective was made possible above all by the fact that the main means of production—the land, its mineral resources, waters, forests, large factories, banks, transport, etc.—had become by that time the property of the state led by the working class. In addition, when Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had become part of the USSR they could rely on the all-round help from the other Soviet republics, where socialism had already emerged victorious, and make wider use of the experience of the October Revolution and of the revolutionary transformations introduced in the world's first socialist state. Thanks to all this the transition to socialism in the Baltic region was effected more quickly than had been the case in the Russian Federation or in the Ukraine. As early as March 1941 the public sector in Estonia accounted for 99 per cent of all the republic's industrial output and in June 1941 the figures for Latvia and Lithuania were 93 and over 75 per cent, respectively.¹

The communist parties of the three republics gradually began to pave the way for the socialist transformation of the rural areas,

¹ V. O. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

explaining to the peasants that the creation of collective farms could only proceed on a voluntary basis. The movement to set up collective farms in the Baltic republics was initiated by the working peasants themselves, as they gradually became more and more convinced that Soviet policy was in complete accord with their interests.

The revolutions of 1940 in the Baltic republics were a remarkable landmark in the history of the international labour movement. They continued the process of revolutionary renewal of the world that had started with the victory of the Russian proletariat: they were the first socialist revolutions after the Great October Revolution in Russia. Yet another link in the chain of the world capitalist system fell off and a number of peoples embarked on the path of socialist construction.

The revolutionary events of 1940 in the Baltic republics served to bear out the general principles of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution. Just as in October 1917 these revolutions developed out of a national crisis that had affected not merely the exploited, or lowest stratum of society, but also the exploiters, or the "top" stratum.

The communist parties of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia succeeded, on the basis of the anti-fascist, popular front, in blending together in a single broad current the class struggle of the urban and rural proletariat, the action by the working peasantry, the democratically-minded members of the intelligentsia, and the anti-fascist sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie. With the onset of the Second World War the views of these different classes and social strata coincided on the main issue—in their awareness of the need to overthrow fascist dictatorships and to consolidate security measures in the region.

The distinctive feature of these broad associations was that they were effected under the direct leadership of Communists on the basis of active measures taken first and foremost by the rank-and-file participants in the struggle. The Communists in these associations were virtually the only well-organised and ideologically cohesive force. After the fascist coups the social democratic and bourgeois-liberal parties had ceased to exist. The working class, from the very outset, had not only come to the fore as the leading force behind the socialist revolution but also as its actual leader. The foremost and in many cases only influence brought to bear upon the working class was that of the Communists. Only in Latvia in the early weeks after the socialist revolution was there another party active in this respect besides the Communist Party and that was the left Socialist Workers and Peasants Party, which later adopted a decision to disband itself and advise its members to join the Communist Party of Latvia.

During the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), the working people

of the Soviet Baltic republics fought heroically in a united family of the Soviet peoples against the German nazi invaders, defending the freedom and independence of their Motherland.

THE PATH TO SOCIALISM BY-PASSING CAPITALISM

The Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) was the first state after the Soviet Union that declared socialism to be its objective. In 1924, the 3rd Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) adopted a decision to develop the country along socialist lines, by-passing capitalism. That same year the first Great People's Khural was convened, which proclaimed Mongolia a People's Republic and adopted its first constitution. The latter laid down the state structure of the MPR, thus consolidating the new popular and democratic type of state with central and local bodies of power in the form of people's *khurals*. The functions of the *khurals* of people's representatives were among other things to consolidate the alliance between the *arats* (livestock breeders) and the working people of the Soviet Union, to ensure the country's political and economic independence, to involve the popular masses in the creation of the economic foundations for non-capitalist development, namely, state-owned and cooperative industry, and to shape a Mongolian working class and a new national culture.

The 4th Congress of the MPRP (1925) adopted a programme which laid down the main trends for social development. Up until 1940 far-reaching anti-feudal and anti-imperialist changes were being effected so as to do away with the vestiges of feudalism, foreign oppression and the last traces of the old ideology, so as to create the necessary conditions for the transition to socialist construction.

Under the leadership of the MPRP the Mongolian people successfully carried out tasks of combatting imperialism: a state monopoly of foreign trade was established, numerous capitalist firms were ousted from the country's economy, the anti-feudal reforms were also completed.

The following factors brought their influence to bear on economic development. First, the industry in the MPR was set up in the period of transition from the feudal to a socialist system, by-passing capitalism, so as to bring into being a socialist sector of the national economy. Second, industrial development was proceeding in a country where there had not been any indigenous working class. Third, thanks to the help received from the Soviet Union the MPR set up and was in a position to develop those spheres of industry which were viable in local conditions. Given the low rate of accumulation in the country the importance of foreign aid was paramount.

In 1925, construction work was completed on a number of factories

for processing raw materials of animal origin, the equipment for which had been provided by the USSR. In 1931, with Soviet help work began on the country's first large-scale industrial enterprise—the Ulan Bator Industrial Complex.¹ The complex became the foundation for the organisation of large-scale factories and the development of industry as an independent branch of the Mongolian economy.

Cooperative enterprises also developed apace. In 1933, the Union of Handicraft and Industrial Cooperatives which in 1934 united 33 artels in a single organisation grew to embrace 151 in 1940.²

Industry provided the economic basis for training the national working class. The distinctive feature of this process consisted in the fact that the working class of Mongolia was “formed not in capitalist conditions, but on the basis of a young national industry in which socialist relations of production dominated”.³ By 1940 there had been over 33,000 factory and office workers employed in industry.⁴ The work of Soviet specialists who put their experience at the service of Mongolian workers was most important in the training of the local work-force.

The trade unions also played a major part in shaping the new working class. The first Trade Union Congress took place in 1927. By June 1, 1928 the Mongolian trade unions numbered 5,528 members.⁵ They played an active part in the building of people's democratic state: they undertook wide-scale work to raise cultural and educational levels and to mould political awareness among workers so as to turn them into the main force in a society advancing towards socialism.

Certain difficulties did arise in this process of building the national working class. It was a first generation whose members for a long period were drawn in the main from the ranks of farm-hands and middle *arats*. It took much time and effort before they could cease their adherence to their own private herd. An important political task of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was to combat religious attitudes that gave rise to passivity, individualism, poor organisation, and to oppose petty-bourgeois views.

¹ G. S. Matveeva, *The Creation of the Material and Technical Basis for Socialism in the Mongolian People's Republic*, Moscow, 1978, p. 46 (in Russian).

² D. Zagasbaldan, *Problems of Socialist Industrialisation in the Mongolian People's Republic*, Moscow, 1973, p. 41 (in Russian).

³ Y. Tsedenbal, “From Feudalism to Socialism. What the Experience of Mongolia's Non-Capitalist Development Can Teach Us”, *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, 1961, p. 14.

⁴ *The Economy of the MPR in 1962. Statistical Returns*, Ulan Bator, 1963, p. 48 (in Russian).

⁵ B. Tudev, *The Formation of the Working Class in the MPR*, Moscow, 1968, p. 65 (in Russian).

The socialist industry was the economic foundation for the emergence of the working class in the Mongolian People's Republic. This meant that the working class emerged as a class fully free from exploitation. It could devote all its energy and strength to the socialist reorganisation of society by peaceful means, to the mastering of socialist ideology, and to the struggle to win the *arats* over to its side as its main ally in the building of socialism.

The working class in the MPR took shape and grew, taking as its model Soviet workers, whose experience had to an enormous degree made possible the emergence of the Mongolian working class as the vanguard of the working people in the socialist restructuring of society. Following the example of the Soviet workers, their Mongolian counterparts initiated socialist emulation campaigns and the movement to train workers on their jobs. In the grim days of August and September 1939, the Mongolian workers armed with guns defended their freedom and the independence of their homeland on the Khalkhin Gol River.

The creation of this working class and the growth of its share of the party membership were of decisive importance for the consolidation of the MPRP. The stratum of workers within the party gradually became its core and main source of support in the struggle against unstable elements unable to stand up against pressure from the petty bourgeoisie, and also the most important factor in the propagation of a Marxist-Leninist world outlook both among members of the MPRP and also among the broad masses of the working people.

The general democratic stage of the development of Mongolia had been completed by the beginning of the 1940s, culminating in the establishment of a sovereign, politically and economically independent people's democratic state, and in the elimination of the economic foundations of feudalism and in the emergence of a socialist sector in the economy. One of the most far-reaching results of this general democratic stage was the creation of a national industry and working class. The working class occupied a fitting place in state and party apparatus, in the people's *khurals*, in the mass organisations through which it began to exercise its leadership of Mongolian society. As a result of the consolidation of the alliance between the working class and the *arats* the Mongolian people's democratic state, which at the general democratic stage represented a variety of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, began gradually to develop into a type of power that was performing the functions of the dictatorship of the working class.¹

The 10th Congress of the MPRP held in 1940 laid down in the new

¹ MPRP Programme, *15th Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party*, Moscow, 1966, p. 172 (in Russian).

party programme the main tasks for the immediate construction of socialist society.¹ The Congress pointed out in its report that the necessary preconditions for the above had already taken shape in the country: the socialist sector had occupied dominant positions in the economy, the class structure of society had changed radically and it now consisted of two friendly classes—the working class and the working *arats*, and the MPRP was assuming a more active role in the guidance of socialist construction.

The 10th Congress of the MPRP admitted it was essential to adopt a new constitution in order to record legislatively the victories scored by the working people of Mongolia in the period 1924-1940. The new constitution was unanimously adopted by the 8th Great People's Khural that took place in June 1940. Art. 1 of the new Constitution stated: "The Mongolian People's Republic is an independent state of working people (*arats*, workers and intellectuals) who have eliminated imperialist and feudal oppression, and have embarked on a non-capitalist path of development so as to ensure the country's subsequent transition to socialism." This meant that the course of action adopted had now the force of law.

The working people of Mongolia then turned to the attainment of historically new objectives. Comrade Y. Tsedenbal, the General Secretary of the Central Committee, MPRP, wrote: "After complex and far-reaching anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist reforms had been introduced, it proved possible by 1940 to complete the first stage of the popular revolution in the MPR, and to start the gradual development of the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution."²

Thus the first part of the task to put into practice Lenin's prediction of the possibility of the transition to socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage, had been successfully completed. The experience of revolutionary change amassed by this time bore witness to the fact that, for the countries still at the pre-capitalist stage of development, Marxism-Leninism and the policies of the revolutionary proletariat were profoundly relevant and ensured optimal solutions to the specific problems faced by these countries and created the best possible conditions for social progress. The main internal factor responsible for the success of the non-capitalist development was the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist MPRP and the main external factor responsible for this success was "the class alliance between the victorious proletariat and the peasantry that had risen up to wage

¹ *Documents on the History of the MPRP*, Vol. 2 (1940-1960), Ulan Bator, 1967, pp. 16-18 (in Mongolian).

² Y. Tsedenbal, "The Glorious Sixtieth Anniversary of the MPRP", *Kommunist*, No. 4, 1981, p. 94.

a struggle for liberation"¹ which had international implications.

The example of the MPR was to enjoy considerable international influence. It demonstrated in practice that the transition to socialism by-passing the capitalist stage of development was possible and revealed the advantages which the orientation on socialism as a long-term perspective can bring to a backward country.

This very fact served to mobilise the popular masses in colonial and dependent countries fighting for national liberation on an unprecedented scale. While the hostile attitude of world imperialism to the national liberation movement, and the inconsistent vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie made it difficult for the peoples of many backward countries to achieve national liberation within the framework of capitalist development, the experience of the Mongolian People's Republic, which opened up new prospects for the national liberation struggle, added greatly to their strength helping to swell the mighty current that was washing away the foundations of the imperialist system of colonial domination.

¹ Y. Tsedenbal, "The Glorious Sixtieth Anniversary of the MPRP", *Kommunist*, No. 4, 1981. p. 93.

Part Two

CLASS BATTLES
OF THE WORKING CLASS

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Chapter 3

SOCIO-POLITICAL FEATURES OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

Since October 1917 important changes were taking place in the socio-political make-up of the working class in the capitalist countries.¹ The building of socialism in the Soviet Union was to have a decisive impact on its development, as did the general conditions in which the class struggle was being waged and changes in the organisation of the capitalist economy. In the period 1924-1928 the capitalist countries experienced a period of relative stability and a temporary decline in the struggle of the masses. The working class waged grim struggles against the onslaught of capital and reaction directed at the social and democratic gains of the working people. In the decade between 1929 and 1939 the working class of the capitalist countries was hit by two economic crises: that of 1929-1933 and a second of 1937-1938, and the first of these in its scale and far-reaching implications outstripped anything that had ever been seen before in the history of capitalism. Economic upheavals coincided with the onset of fascism and the increased danger of a new world war. Against this background the working class and its vanguard—the communist parties—were obliged to direct their main effort towards organising the anti-fascist and anti-war movement.

The increasing concentration of production and capital, capitalist rationalisation, growing state intervention in the economy exerted a considerable influence upon the structure and position of the working class.

The internationalisation of productive forces and methods of exploitation, the intensification of the capitalist international division of labour, the spreading of capitalist relations in the colonial and de-

¹ This chapter treats the working class concentrated in the main centres of the capitalist world: in Europe, North America and Japan. An analysis of the working class in Asia, Africa and Latin America is to be found in chapters 7 and 8 of this volume.

pendent countries via the export of capital, the rising tide of migration, all these factors provided an undeniably broader base for the development of international contacts between the workers of different countries.

THE SWELLING RANKS OF THE WORKING CLASS

During the 1920s and 1930s the trend towards the proletarianisation of the population continued. While in the early 20th century there were 85 million wage workers in the industrially developed capitalist countries, by the beginning of the Second World War the army of wage workers had risen to 141,200,000, and constituted 65.9 per cent of the working population.¹

The following table provides a general picture of the increase in the share of wage workers in the working population of the main capitalist countries:

Table 2

| Country | Year | | Country | Year | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1920 (%) | 1940 (%) | | 1920 (%) | 1940 (%) |
| USA | 68.3 | 77.5 | France | 56.0 | 59.7 |
| Britain | 86.8 | 89.1 | Italy | 45.2 | 51.9 |
| Germany | 66.5 | 68.3 | Japan | 37.8 | 46.0 |

Source: "Statistics: The Working Population and the Working Class in the Developed Capitalist Countries", *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, No. 7, 1970, p. 154.

As these figures show, in the 1920s and 1930s the ranks of wage workers constituted the vast majority of the working population in the developed capitalist countries.

The uneven levels of capitalist development were responsible for the differences in the growth rates of the wage workers and of their share in the working population in various countries. In the United States, Britain, Germany and France the wage workers constituted the absolute majority of the working population. In Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Japan and Canada the wage workers accounted for close on half the working population. In Spain, Portugal and most countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe the numbers of wage workers were also growing, although they accounted for a much smaller share

¹ *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, No. 7, 1970, pp. 152, 154.

of the working population than in the more developed capitalist countries.

Important changes were also taking place in the structure of the army of wage workers: the drop in the number of wage workers in agriculture was continuing, while at the same time there was rapid growth in the share of working people employed in trade, the services sector and particularly in that of white-collar workers.

Yet the core of the army of wage workers remained as before those employed in factories, who constituted over half the total.¹

The growth of the proletariat employed in factories proceeded at different rates, varying from one country to another. In Japan, for example, the number of industrial workers came to close on two million in 1928, but by 1938 exceeded three million.² The number of industrial workers in the United States and Denmark almost doubled in the same period, while it went up by 50 per cent in Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and Austria. The number of industrial workers rose more slowly in Italy, Spain, Greece, and in the majority of the countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The industrial proletariat grew only to an insignificant extent in France, Belgium and Switzerland.³

In the period under discussion, the concentration of the industrial proletariat increased. In the United States, for example, between 1914 and 1937 the proportion of workers in the manufacturing industries employed in factories with a staff of 50 and below fell from 23.7 to 16.8 per cent, while the proportion of the work-force in factories employing over 250 rose from 45.6 to 55.5 per cent.⁴ In Canada the proportion of workers in the manufacturing industries employed in factories with a work-force of 50 or less was 25.2 per cent in 1929, whereas in 1944 it sank to a mere 17.4 per cent. During the same period the proportion of blue and white-collar workers employed in factories with a staff of 50 or more grew from 74.8 to 82.6 per cent.⁵

More and more of the industrial workers were being concentrated in factories employing 500 or more. In Japan factories of this size accounted for 25.5 per cent of the total in 1930 and for 34.4 per cent in 1939; in Germany the corresponding figures for 1925 and 1939 were 35.8 and 43.8 per cent; in Italy the figures for 1927 and 1939 were respectively 17.3 and 22.5 per cent; in France between 1921 and 1936 this section of the work-force rose from 19.2 to 20.7 per cent and in Sweden it rose from 19.7 to 28 per cent between 1920 and 1945.⁶

¹ Ibid., p. 153.

² *The Working Class of Japan*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 245-49 (in Russian).

³ Figures collected on the basis of national statistics.

⁴ *Census of Manufactures: 1947*, Washington, 1950.

⁵ Figures taken from *Canada Year Book*. 1962.

⁶ Figures collected on the basis of national statistics.

This meant that the size of the "average" factory had increased and the very concept "large factory" was changing. At the beginning of the 20th century a factory employing over 50 workers was considered a large one.¹ In the years that followed, as a result of the concentration of production and capital, and of the changes affecting technology and the divisions between the various branches of industry, the dimensions of the "average" factory had grown considerably. Factories employing between 100 and 300 and more wage workers were now regarded as "average" and those employing 500 or more were seen as "large".

Yet side by side with these large plants and factories there were still a large number of small and tiny enterprises. Indeed, their total number even grew during certain periods. The process of capitalist monopolisation had contradictory consequences: it led not only to the ruin of small factories, but also to the formation of new ones in a wide range of spheres of the economy. The emergence of a monopoly-dominated motor-car industry ruined tens of thousands of factories engaged in the production and servicing of old cars, yet the automobile monopolies, in their turn, gave rise to hundreds of thousands of small and tiny factories for the production of components, repair workshops, petrol stations, etc.

The concentration of workers in individual enterprises and within the framework of the monopolies went hand in hand with the territorial concentration of the work-force in large industrial centres.

Substantial changes were also taking place in the structure of the working class itself. As in the period preceding 1917, so now the proportion of agricultural workers in the overall total of members of the working class continued to fall. By the end of the 1930s the proportion of the agricultural workers in the total work-force in the advanced capitalist countries was little more than half what it had been at the very beginning of the century. In other words, the total of the working class was growing chiefly due to an increase in the size of the industrial proletariat.

The branch structure of the industrial working class was being subjected to vast changes. In the period under consideration, the total and proportion of workers employed in the extracting industry, in the food, textile, leather and shoe industries, i.e., in the "old" branches of industry, which had grown particularly quickly during the early stages of the emergence of the industrial proletariat, had dropped, while there had been a rapid rise in the numbers of workers in the metallurgical, metal-working and chemical industries. The most rapid rates of growth in numbers of workers were to be

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 196.

found in mechanical engineering, the motor-car industry, the aviation and electro-technical industries.

In the United States, for instance, in the two decades that preceded the Second World War, the number of workers employed in the extracting industries dropped to approximately 300,000, while the number of workers in mechanical engineering went up by 50 per cent. Over the same period in Canada the number of workers employed in the metallurgical industry and mechanical engineering grew by over 200 per cent, and the number of metal-workers in Spain went up by over 100 per cent.¹ In France, by the mid-1930s the number of workers in heavy industry came to equal the number of those employed in light industry, who up until the beginning of the 1920s had been the largest single group in the French industrial proletariat.²

With reference to Russian data Lenin outlined the gradual emergence, common features and differences between the three main contingents of the working class in the sphere of material production: the proletariat employed in simple capitalist cooperatives, the proletariat employed in capitalist manufactories, and finally the factory proletariat working in large-scale mechanised production at its first stage (small-lot production on the basis of multi-purpose equipment). The subsequent development of large-scale mechanised production led to the emergence of production flow-lines, which had a direct impact on the evolution of the factory-based proletariat.

The introduction of new production processes and the new system for the organisation of production had a considerable effect on the nature of labour itself; it furthered the emergence and development of a new detachment of the working class manning assembly lines.³

The professional skills and qualifications required of the industrial proletariat were becoming ever more complex. The top stratum within the working class now consisted of highly skilled workers trained to meet industry's new requirements: foremen and supervisors, adjusters of new assembly lines and quality inspectors. This group was coming to play an ever more important role in industry. Side by side with them on the shop-floor were representatives of the "old" trades: steel founders, rolling-mill operatives, pattern-makers, coal cutters, modellers, engine-drivers, print-workers and so on.

The introduction of new production processes made special demands on the workers with regard to their technical skills and general education. From the new stratum of highly qualified workers it

¹ Calculated from national statistics.

² I. A. Vitver, A. E. Sluka, G. P. Chernikov, *Modern France*, Moscow, 1969, p. 102 (in Russian).

³ For more details, see Yu. A. Vasilchuk, *The Scientific and Technological Revolution and the Working Class Under Capitalism*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 12-13 (in Russian).

was not so much the skills of physical, manual labour that were demanded, but rather a higher level of general education, knacks for organisation, broad technological know-how and the ability to adapt to quickly changing conditions in the factory.

The middle stratum of workers consisted of skilled workers, such as metal-workers, boiler-makers, fitters, mechanics, repairers, and electricians. The majority of those skilled workers was made up of workers operating machine tools: milling-machine operators, turners, polishers, weavers, etc.

The most rapid increase in the numbers of workers at that period was to be found in assembly-line production among the semi-skilled but highly specialised workers.

The wide use of conveyor systems made it possible to divide the production process into fairly simple technological operations which could be carried out by semi-skilled workers. This led to the appearance and rapid proliferation of assemblers on a mass scale in various branches of the manufacturing industry. In the Ford plants, for instance, where wide use was made of the conveyor system, 43 per cent of all the work operations required a single day's training, 36 per cent of the operations required between one and eight days and only one per cent of the total required between one year and six.¹

The technology of mass production requiring above all manual tasks on the conveyor belt at the assembly stage had a profound impact on the correlation between numbers of skilled and semi-skilled workers. The skilled worker possessing a wide range of skills was gradually being substituted by the semi-skilled worker.

At the bottom of the hierarchy with regard to skills and qualifications came the unskilled labourers: dockers, loaders, auxiliary workers, and so on, who carried out the simplest of tasks. The heavy, physical work fell to their lot. The proportion of the proletariat that this category of workers represented declined.

The following table reflects the changes in the patterns of skills and qualifications to be found among the workers employed in US industry:

Table 3

| Workers Grouped According to Skills | 1920 (%) | 1940 (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Highly skilled and skilled | 31.0 | 26.9 |
| Semi-skilled | 36.0 | 48.2 |
| Unskilled workers | 33.0 | 24.8 |

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, Washington, 1953.

¹ M. Rubinstein, *Capitalist Rationalisation*, Moscow, 1930, p. 55 (in Russian).

The drop in the proportion of the work-force made up of the skilled and unskilled workers as a result of the increase in the number of semi-skilled workers was a feature typical of most industrially advanced capitalist countries.

The inevitable requirements stemming from the development of capitalist production and the increasingly sophisticated technology meant that a more educated work-force overall was now needed. The vast majority of industrial workers in the countries of Europe in the 1930s had, as a rule, between four and six years schooling, and in the United States seven to eight years. In Japan, workers who had completed their secondary education already constituted almost a third of the proletariat by this time.¹

The class struggle also had a profound influence on the improvement in the level of skills and general education among the working class. The exacerbation of social conflicts in the capitalist countries and also the influence of the achievements of the Soviet Union in the sphere of culture forced the bourgeoisie to make certain concessions to the working class in schooling.

In the period under discussion substantial changes took place in the sex and age patterns of the industrial proletariat. The number of women workers had grown and there had also been a change in their deployment within industry. In the textile, clothing, food and leather goods industries women still represented more than half the work-force. As a result of the transition to assembly-line production women's labour began to be used in other branches of the manufacturing industry. Women began to be employed on an increasingly wide scale as assemblers, sorters and packers within the conveyor system, and as auxiliary workers, etc. The lack of adequate means in many workers' families forced women to look for work, even in factories where working conditions were hard.

The proportion of women workers in the industrial proletariat was in the main stable: a quarter of the total work-force in the USA, Belgium, France and Italy, a fifth in Britain, Canada, Czechoslovakia. Fewer women were employed in the economy of most Scandinavian countries. In Japan, on the other hand, before the Second World War women already accounted for nearly one third of the industrial proletariat.

Under pressure from the labour movement the governments of many countries were compelled to pass laws prohibiting the employment in industry of children under 14. However, in the textile, leather and food industries, particularly in small enterprises, despite these laws, child labour was still used, even though on a far smaller scale

¹ Masanori Horie, *The Working Class of Japan*, Moscow, 1965, p. 116 (in Russian).

than at the beginning of the 20th century. Yet at the same time young people aged between 14 and 16 were being employed on a considerably wider basis than before in the manufacturing industries of Japan, France, Germany, Italy and several other countries. Just like the women, so these youngsters also worked on the assembly lines.

In the period under discussion the stratum of white-collar workers was also continuing to grow. Lenin had foreseen this development: "In all spheres of people's labour, capitalism increases the number of office and professional workers with particular rapidity and makes a growing demand for intellectuals."¹ In the United States, the number of workers employed in the retail trade and the services sector doubled² between the 1920s and the end of the Second World War. In France, the number of white-collar workers in the working population almost doubled between 1900 and 1940.³ In Belgium, the number of working people in the retail trade and finance organisations also doubled between 1920 and 1945.⁴ In Denmark, the number of white-collar workers in trade and the finance system doubled between 1920 and 1940 and in the services sector and government service it tripled.⁵ In Norway, the white-collar workers employed in offices and the retail network together with engineers and technicians (not counting administrative personnel) accounted for almost 12 per cent of the working population, but their share had risen as high as 17 per cent by the 1940s.⁶

Table 4

The proportion of engineering and technical personnel and white-collar workers in industry
(as a percentage of the overall total of wage-workers)

| Years | USA | Britain | Germany | France |
|-----------|------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1921-1930 | 17.9 | 13.7 | 11.9 | 12.8 |
| 1931-1940 | 17.7 | 15.0 | 14.0 | 14.6 |

Source: *The Modern Working Class in the Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1965, p. 30.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Review", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1977, p. 202.

² Calculated from data provided in *The Handbook of Basic Economic Statistics*, No. 7, 1963; *Employment and Earnings*, Vol. 9, No. 12, June 1963.

³ *Annuaire statistique de la France 1959*, Paris, 1959.

⁴ *Annuaire statistique de la Belgique 1961*, Bruxelles, 1961.

⁵ *Labour under Capitalism*, p. 212.

⁶ *Statistik Årsbog for Norge 1959*, Oslo, 1959.

The number of white-collar workers increased not only in the services sector, the retail network and government service but also in industry in the majority of the capitalist countries.

The international migration of workers also continued to grow.¹ Although the distribution of manpower resources between the various links of the world capitalist system was always basically of an uncontrolled nature, state-monopoly intervention in these processes began to intensify in this period. The bourgeois state machines were becoming more and more involved in the recruitment and deployment of foreign workers.

The main destinations for these migrant workers were also changing. While the influx of migrant workers into the USA continued during the 1920s, although at a less intensive rate than before, there was now a marked increase in the migration into Western Europe and America from Asian countries, from the less developed countries of Europe into the more developed ones, from North Africa into Europe, and from the countries of Latin and Central America into the United States.

The immigration of these workers changed the ethnic composition of the working class in some capitalist countries. In order to counteract that influence the quota system was introduced in the United States in the 1920s, according to which the annual influx of immigrants was not to exceed 3 per cent of the total number of each ethnic group that had been living in the United States in 1910.² This curtailment of the flow of immigrant workers into the United States accelerated the great migration of Blacks from the South to the North. By 1930 the number of Blacks in the North of the United States had doubled in comparison with the figure for 1915.³

The capitalist monopolies went out of their way to use immigrant workers so as to bring about a split in the labour movement, or in order to fan racial and national prejudices. Foreign workers in the United States and in Western Europe were in the overwhelming majority of cases employed in the most labour-intensive branches of industry: in the coal and mining industries, in agriculture, in loading and unloading, and also in domestic service, as street cleaners, etc.... Lenin wrote: "The exploitation of *worse paid* labour from backward countries is particularly characteristic of imperialism. On this exploitation rests, to a certain degree, the *parasitism* of rich imperialist countries, which bribe a part of their workers with higher wages

¹ For purposes of comparison, see *The International Labour Movement. Questions of Its History and Theory*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1976, p. 10 (in Russian).

² S. V. Filippov, *The United States: Immigration and Citizenship*, Moscow, 1973, p. 41 (in Russian).

³ M. Eppse, *The Negro, too, in American History*, Nashville, 1943, p. 318; J. S. Allen, *The Negro Question in the United States*, New York, 1936, pp. 55-93.

while shamelessly and unrestrainedly exploiting the labour of 'cheap' foreign workers."¹ At the same time Lenin also stressed the undeniably positive aspect of this migration. He called attention to the fact that monopoly capitalism was uprooting millions of workers from backward countries out of a semi-medieval world and placing them in the ranks of the international army of the proletariat.²

THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASS

Marx in his day had written that under the despotism of capital "the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse"³. Lenin underlined the fact that under capitalism there was a steady increase in exploitation, social inequality, the precariousness of the workers' existence, unemployment and various types of privations for ever wider strata of the working masses, increased plunder of the masses with regard to "education, light and knowledge".⁴

Marxists had always been aware that the struggle of the working class, of all working people countered the tendency of the capitalists to worsen their position and acted as a counterweight to the law of surplus value and to the universal law of capitalist accumulation. Lenin wrote: "He [Marx] spoke of the growth of poverty, degradation, etc., indicating at the same time the counteracting tendency and the real social forces that alone could give rise to this tendency."⁵

Thanks to the building of socialism in the USSR a new factor emerged which made possible an intensification of the struggle by the working people of the capitalist countries for their essential rights and which also to a certain extent modified the operation of the laws of capitalism. The emergence of a new detachment of the working class—a socialist working class, which had thrown off the yoke of exploitation and confidently built socialism—had an enormous and revolutionising influence on the whole course of world development. Monopoly capital was obliged more and more frequently to make certain concessions to the working people so as to avert the exacerbation of social conflicts.

At the time of the general crisis of capitalism there also appeared a tendency among the reactionary circles from the world of finance

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 168.

² V. I. Lenin, "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1980, p. 454.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 604.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Material for Working out the R.S.D.L.P. Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, 1971, p. 50; V. I. Lenin, "The Question of Ministry of Education Policy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 139.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Review", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 201.

capital to resort to fascism and war as the last hope for saving capitalism. The working class, who had not yet recovered from the results of the First World War, was thrown into the abyss of new catastrophes and suffering.

Lenin stressed the cyclical character of the processes of deterioration of the position of the working class. "Crises and periods of industrial stagnation, in their turn, ... still further increase the dependence of wage-labour on capital, and lead still more rapidly to the relative and sometimes to the absolute deterioration of the condition of the working class."¹ In the period under discussion there occurred the world economic crisis of 1929-1933, which meant for certain strata of the working class not only more acute poverty, but also an increased threat of moral degradation and a loss of any sense of self-respect.

It was precisely in such critical periods for the development of capitalism that the working class in the capitalist countries had to wage grim class battles in order to stem the tide of mass-scale pauperisation.

As a result of the development of state-monopoly capitalism the relations between wage labour and capital assumed more and more clearly the form of relations between the workers and the organised class of exploiters actively utilising in its own interests the political and economic power of the bourgeois state.

The Marxist analysis of the position of the working class under capitalism is based on the assessment of the growth of the mass of surplus value obtained by aggregate capital.

On the whole, the mass of surplus value produced in the economies of the capitalist countries grew steadily. In the United States, for example, the mass of surplus value amounted in 1910 to 5,500 million dollars and in 1929 it had risen to 36,400 million dollars.

This enormous rise in the mass of surplus value was produced first and foremost through the intensification of the exploitation of wage labour. In the United States' economy the rate of surplus value, reflecting the degree of exploitation of wage labour, rose from 112 to 143 per cent over the period 1910-1929.²

Flow-line mass-production, new forms for the organisation of labour and work operations ushered in a new degree of exploitation, to which capital now subjected wage labour.

In the documents adopted by the 6th Comintern Congress it was noted: "There is not the slightest doubt that considerable progress has been made in the technique of industry in a number of capitalist countries. In some countries (United States, Germany) it has

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 467.

² Yu. A. Vasilchuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

assumed the character of a technical revolution. The gigantic growth in the employment of internal combustion engines, electrification, the development of the chemical industry, the new methods of producing synthetic fuels and raw materials (benzine, artificial silk, etc.), the employment of light metals and the extensive development of automobile transport on the one hand, and the new forms of organisation of labour, which is linked up with the extraordinarily rapid development of the endless chain system on the other, have revived the productive forces of capitalism."¹

Monopoly capital was beginning on an as yet unprecedentedly wide scale to introduce into production intensive methods for the exploitation of workers, which Lenin had referred to as a "scientific" system of sweating.²

In capitalist production the system devised by the American engineer Frederick Taylor was now being implemented on a wide scale. Lenin had referred to this system as an enormous step forward in the scientific study of labour and in the elaboration of methods for intensifying exploitation of the workers.³

Taylor's system was geared in the main to the "first-class worker". In an explanation of the principles for professional selection which he had devised, Frederick Taylor declared in one of the US Congress committees: "Now, what I mean by 'first class' men is set before you by what I mean by 'first class' horses. I mean that there are big powerful men suited to heavy work, just as the dray horses are suited to the coal wagon... No man who can work and won't work has any place under scientific management."⁴ "Second-class" workers unable to cope with the volume and rhythm of work would be dismissed and their places would be taken by others.

The Ford Concern developed Taylor's ideas using to this end a conveyor-belt which determined mechanically the speed at which all work operations were carried out. The fullest expression of these new forms of exploitation was to be found in the work method referred to as "uninterrupted flow", in which the central element is known as "progressive assembly" on the moving conveyor-belt.⁵

The conveyor system introduced qualitatively new factors into the intensification of labour in industry. The movement of the con-

¹ *Communism and the International Situation. Theses Adopted at the 6th World Congress of the Communist International. 1928, London, 1929, p. 7.*

² V. I. Lenin, "A 'Scientific' System of Sweating", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, 1973, p. 594.

³ See: V. I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 79.

⁴ *Scientific Management*, Ed. by Clarence Bertrand Thompson, New York, 1922, pp. 755-56.

⁵ S. A. Yershov, *USA: The Development of Forms and Methods for Capitalist Exploitation*, Moscow, 1974, p. 98 (in Russian).

conveyor-belt forced workers to operate at the speed predetermined for every operation by the pace of the machine itself and that of the operations carried out by adjacent workers. If one individual worker slackened the pace of his work this led to disruption right down the conveyor. This meant that the whole system for the organisation of labour in this type of mass production was based on the principle that all workers should spur on others to work still faster. The conveyor system was supplemented by devices to time the movements of the individual worker. This led to the introduction of time norms for the movements involved in each operation that were worked out in advance: special diagrams for movements of the right and left hand, etc., were laid down for the workers on such production lines.

The systems for paying wages were also adapted in line with the new organisation of labour using conveyor-belt production, and these provided an additional means for increasing production rates. In the 1920s, complex bonus systems were introduced to the wage structure on a wide scale and also so-called analytical assessment of work categories. Each classification index for assessing work was now arrived at via an appropriate points system, and the worker had to strain all his efforts in order to get a total number of points which would mean that his wages at least assured him the necessary minimum of subsistence. The Bedaux system, characterised by high levels of obtruse complexity that made it almost impossible for the workers to comprehend, laid down supposedly "scientific" wage levels in accordance with a number of indices: experience, agility, intensity of labour, hazards involved, and so on. Bonuses provided for charge-hands who determined the work quotas for the workers under them played an important role in this system, which relied on extreme intensification of labour and "scientific" deception of the workers. Such bonuses were, for all intents and purposes, a form of bribery for supervisory personnel. This system was widely implemented in the capitalist world.

Levels of productivity and average work quotas for the individual worker varied considerably from one country to another. According to 1932 figures, one worker in the cotton industry produced in an average week: 0.7 bale of yarn in the USA, 0.5 in Germany, 0.44 in Japan, and 0.16 bale in British India.¹ Yet the general trend in the capitalist countries was for a gradual growth in output per worker—this provided one of the main indices for greater exploitation of wage labour. In Germany, hourly output grew by 22 per cent between 1925 and 1929. In the coal industry in the Ruhr the amount of coal mined by each shift of face-workers almost doubled between 1923

¹ Y. A. Pevzner, *The Position and Struggle of the Working Classes in Modern Japan*, Moscow, 1956, p. 7 (in Russian).

and 1932.¹ The average output quota grew particularly dramatically in those branches of industry, where capitalist rationalisation went hand in hand not so much with technological progress, as with the growth in the intensity of labour.

Table 5

Output per Worker in the United States
(1923-1925 = 100)

| Year | Metallurgy and mecha- nical engi- neering | Textile industry | Shoe industry | All proces- sing indust- ries |
|------|--|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1929 | 125.1 | 115.5 | 116.3 | 113.2 |
| 1932 | 109.2 | 131.1 | 127.9 | 132.9 |
| 1936 | 164.0 | 148.7 | 176.6 | 138.2 |

Source: *The Position of the Working Class in the Capitalist Countries Over Twenty Years (1917-1937)*, p. 125.

Making use of capitalist rationalisation techniques, the monopolies obtained enormous profits at the expense of the overexploitation of the army of wage workers, of physically and mentally overstretched workers, which led to an increase in work-related diseases and industrial traumatism. In 1938, for instance, in the United States alone the number of workers suffering from industrial accidents exceeded 1,600,000, while the figure for Italy reached close on 500,000, in Germany over 1,500,000, in France over 700,000, in Britain over 300,000 and in Finland 50,000.²

Marx considered that the shortening of the working day was "a preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive".³ Lenin drew attention on more than one occasion to the need for organised struggle for the shortening of the working day and legislation on working hours that would be acceptable for the working class.⁴ In the period under consideration some reduction of the working day did take place.

¹ *The Position of the Working Class in the Capitalist Countries Over Twenty Years (1917-1937)*, Moscow, 1938, p. 125 (in Russian).

² *Labour under Capitalism. Statistical Returns*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 762, 765; V. A. Aleshkevich, *The Universal Law of Capitalist Accumulation and the Impoverishment of the Working Masses*, Minsk, 1974, p. 72 (both in Russian).

³ Karl Marx, "Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council. The Different Questions", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1976, p. 79.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "On Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 312; V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress of Textile Workers. April 19, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 520.

The increasing complexity of production and technology, the greater mental strain, increased quotas per worker, all these set physical limits to the utilisation of the work-force. At the same time the growing intellectual and social requirements of the working class made it necessary that workers be granted more free time. The improvement of the general level of education of the working class was an essential condition for the further development of capitalist production. It seemed that the interests of the capitalists were leading them

Table 6

| Period | Length of working week (in hours) | Period | Length of working week (in hours) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1900-1909 | 61 | 1920-1929 | 52 |
| 1910-1919 | 58 | 1930-1939 | 49 |

Source: J. Kuczynski, "Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus", Vol. 37 of *Eine Weltübersicht über die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter*, Berlin, 1967, p. 97.

towards a "voluntary" reduction of the working day. Even the theorists who advocated new forms of exploitation, such as Taylor, Emerson and Bedaux maintained that in industry using the conveyor-belt systems growth in production would be achieved most successfully if an eight-hour working day were to be introduced.

However, capitalists would not be capitalists, if they did not strive to exploit their workers and lengthen working hours beyond normal limits. The reduction of working hours was the result of many years' struggle by the proletariat to defend their rights and of the impact of social legislation that had been introduced by the world's first state of workers and peasants.

In Britain, in the 1930s, a "usual" working week came to 47 or 48 hours in most branches of industry. In France, in the first half of the 1930s, the actual working week in industry came to approximately 45 hours. In the US manufacturing industry the working week was reduced between 1924 and 1936 from 44.2 to 39.2 hours.¹

Figures relating to the reduction of the average working week in the capitalist countries in the inter-war years in comparison with the beginning of the 20th century make most interesting reading (see Table 6).

The involvement of the bourgeois state in the regulation of working hours also showed a marked increase. The aim of regulation by the

¹ *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, Geneva, 1956-1959.

state was not merely to reduce the length of the working day but also to cut down overtime work and the length of the working week for various specific categories of workers. However, these attempts at regulation contained various major errors: in most capitalist countries such regulation did not extend to agricultural or seasonal workers, to the civil servants and workers in the defence industry, to those employed in the health services or in the services sector. Indeed, the bourgeois legislation on the eight-hour working day did not contain sufficient guarantees against arbitrary behaviour on the part of entrepreneurs. Violations of the law in cases of "national emergency" were permitted and made possible through the introduction of "voluntary" overtime work, etc.

The question as to the length of the working day remained the central concern for the class struggle waged by the working class. In a number of countries monopoly capital launched a major offensive against the social gains of the working people. The onslaught by the monopolies intensified particularly in periods of economic recession, when the position of the working class was weakened.

In Germany, for example, at the end of 1923 and the beginning of 1924 the struggle between labour and capital over the length of the working day ended in a victory for the capitalists. New labour agreements frequently laid down a working week of between 54 and 59 hours.¹

Fluctuations in levels of employment also affected the situation of the working class. During the inter-war period the number of unemployed reached an unprecedented scale. In the six major capitalist countries alone (the United States, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan) the number of unemployed, according to official figures, reached the following levels (in thousands: in 1929—5,360.3; in 1932—22,180.6; in 1938—13,327.0).² The position of the proletariat as the exploited class of society was made worse by the fact that unemployment had become chronic and widespread: levels did not drop to any considerable degree even during years of cyclical boom.

Unemployment reached a particularly catastrophic level during the crisis of 1929-1933. It was precisely at that period that the position of the working class underwent not merely a relative deterioration, but a deterioration in absolute terms.

A Swedish worker described the situation in his own country (Sweden was then considered one of the most "prosperous" countries in the capitalist world) during the crisis years as follows: "The workers were living like animals. Usually families consisted of two adults and between five and six children. Often they lived in dilapidated

¹ F. Markuzon, *An Outline of the Labour and Living Conditions of Workers in Germany*, Moscow, 1925, p. 53 (in Russian).

² V. M. Koltunov, *Modern Capitalism: the Position of the Working Class*, Moscow, 1977, p. 123 (in Russian).

hovels, in flats consisting of one room and a kitchen, without any comforts. And how they used to cough in all the dirt! Consumption, malnutrition, alcoholism. Queues and hunger were part of everyday life in the early 1930s. At that time over 30 per cent of trade union members were out of work. Desperate workers often ended their lives by committing suicide. Shooting themselves through the head became almost a symbolic act of the times. The work made available by the Relief Committee for the Unemployed meant humiliation. Their wages amounted to 75 per cent of the lowest available wages to be had locally. Workers out of a job were looked upon as lepers, they were shamefully treated. And every second worker was without work."¹

Table 7

| Germany | | Britain | | France | | USA | |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Period | Index | Period | Index | Period | Index | Period | Index |
| 1924-1932 | 86 | 1924-1932 | 91 | 1924-1934 | 99 | 1922-1933 | 117 |
| 1933-1939 | 88 | 1933-1939 | 96 | 1934-1939 | 95 | 1933-1939 | 117 |

Source: J. Kuczynski, op. cit., p. 111.

Lenin stressed that "the development of capitalism inevitably entails a rising level of requirements for the entire population, including the industrial proletariat".² The sharp rise in the intensification of labour led to increase expenditure to enable workers to replenish their energy, to purchase food and pay for medical treatment, etc. Substantial changes were also observed in the working class' demands for education and living conditions. Among the workers' new social needs were newspapers and journals to read, cinemas to frequent, normal living conditions and essential community services.

In the course of the class struggle the working class succeeded in partially satisfying its needs. As a result of this struggle certain improvements were to be noted in workers' living conditions, diet, and clothing. However, all in all, the gap between the growing productive forces and these needs, on the one hand, and the standard of living enjoyed by the bulk of the working class, on the other, not only remained but began to grow still bigger. Crises of overproduction

¹ A. Rundberg, *En svensk arbetares memoarer*, Stockholm, 1973, pp. 35, 36.

² V. I. Lenin, "On the So-Called Market Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, p. 106.

led to a serious deterioration in the position of the working class. During the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism real wages were for long periods at the level they had already reached by the beginning of the century or even lower than that level.

Table 7 illustrates the way in which real wages for workers from the four main countries of the capitalist world changed during the 1920s and 1930s. As can be seen from this table (1900=100 per cent) growth in real wages varied widely; in the period 1924-1939 the level of real wages dropped in France, hardly changed in Germany, remained stable in the United States and rose slightly in Britain (while remaining everywhere, except in the United States, lower than the levels achieved at the beginning of the 20th century). Only in certain isolated periods of cyclical development was any increase to be noted in the wages of German and French workers.

Considerable differences were to be found in wage levels from one country to another. Weekly wages for American workers in the cotton industry (1932), for instance, were 170 per cent higher than the wages of a German worker in the same industry, 440 per cent higher than those of a Japanese cotton worker, and 530 per cent higher than those of a textile worker in British India.¹ According to ILO figures, average hourly pay for a skilled worker in Turin before the Second World War was 43 per cent lower than that in Paris and 61 per cent lower than the respective London figure.²

An important factor affecting the level of worker's wages in the capitalist countries was the inclusion of women and youths in the production process. Female labour, as a rule, was paid at between one third and two fifths less than the rate for man's labour. In the United States and in France, women's wages in the manufacturing industry amounted to 58 per cent of those earned by men; in Germany, the wages for unskilled women workers in industry and in the transport system were two thirds of those earned by men.³

Low wage levels were particularly common in such countries as Japan, and the states of Central and South-Eastern Europe. In those countries wide use was made of seasonal and casual workers often hired on a daily basis, who were subjected to particularly harsh exploitation. Labour legislation did not cater for them, and they were paid far less than regular workers.

The predominant trend in the advanced capitalist countries was to reduce the gap in levels of wages paid to skilled and non-skilled workers. Rates for wages paid to skilled industrial workers in the Unit-

¹ Y. A. Pevzner, op. cit., p. 7.

² S. M. Slobodskoi, *Italian Fascism and Its Collapse*, Moscow, 1946, p. 153 (in Russian).

³ *The Position of the Working Class in the Capitalist Countries Over Twenty Years (1917-1937)*, p. 140.

ed States, for example, varied in relation to rates paid to non-skilled workers according to the following scale in comparison with levels recorded for 1907 (calculated on a percentage basis).

Table 8

| Period | Rates | Period | Rates | Period | Rates |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1907 | 205 | 1931-1932 | 180 | 1937-1940 | 165 |

Source: H. Ober, "Occupational Wage Differentials 1907-1947", *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1948, p. 130.

The bourgeoisie was obliged to make considerable concessions to the working people and to agree to the creation of a system of state insurance, including unemployment benefits. In the 1920s, compulsory insurance against unemployment was introduced in Austria, Bulgaria, Britain, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Australia and Switzerland (twelve cantons).

These systems of insurance against unemployment could not fully satisfy the needs of the workers. The insurance was only provided for part of the working class, chiefly for those employed in industry. Insurance funds for the unemployed consisted in the main of contributions from the workers themselves. Payment of unemployment benefit only covered a stipulated period and was subject to a whole series of conditions: the record of employment prior to loss of work, the size of contributions made to the unemployment insurance fund, the length of residence in the said locality, etc. The size of this benefit was equivalent only to a small proportion of the workers' normal wages.

The history of the labour movement clearly shows the dependence of such reforms on the advance of the revolutionary movement. In that revolutionary year of 1918 the German proletariat secured the right to state unemployment benefit. When the tide of revolution began to abate in the autumn of 1923, part of the expenditure for this purpose had to be provided by the workers' own contributions. In July 1927, the system of state benefits was replaced by a system of insurance against unemployment financed from deductions made from the workers' wages, which constituted 3 per cent of the latter, and from equal contributions made by the employers. However, this system did not extend to cover 2,500,000 agricultural workers and also apprentices. The emergency decree issued by the government on December 1, 1930 provided for a drastic restriction of state contributions to funds for insurance against unemployment. Meanwhile, the

size of contributions made by employees rose to 6.5 per cent.¹ During the world economic crisis (1929-1933) the bourgeoisie after declaring it to be essential that the "social" burden of expenditure on the unemployed be lightened, began to introduce "reforms" in the sphere of insurance, as a result of which whole strata of workers were deprived of access to social insurance and forced to accept reduced unemployment benefit and pay larger contributions.²

The course of the class struggle exerted a considerable influence on the position of the working class. The British bourgeoisie, for example, making the most of the defeat of the General Strike in May 1926, launched a broad-scale offensive against the rights of the working people. It was the miners who found themselves in the most difficult situation of all. Many mines in South Wales were closed down and thousands of miners became jobless. In his description of the position of the British working class in those years Allen Hutt wrote: "In those townships where all the pits are closed down, where perhaps the majority of the miners have been without work for years on end, a feeling is engendered that there will never be work any more.... Most notably in the derelict areas the pulse of social and cultural life is slowed.... It is necessary to spend some time in the townships of the Welsh valleys to realise what the mental torture of prolonged unemployment means to active men."³

Meanwhile, the victory of the Popular Front in France, on the other hand, not only led to an improvement in the position of the French working class but also helped raise its confidence. An important landmark in this respect was the introduction on June 24, 1936 of a new law concerning collective agreements. According to this law, questions of wage levels, working conditions, the observance of hygienic standards and work-safety regulations, guarantees of non-interference in trade union activities in factories, the organisation of vocational training, etc., were covered by collective agreements. Between June and September 1936, 700 collective agreements were drawn up, by December 1936 their total had reached 2,326 and by the middle of 1937 it had risen still further to 4,595, of which close on 600 covered a whole region or a whole branch of industry.⁴ The government of the Popular Front adopted a law to introduce a 40-hour working week with maintained wage levels. Another law of great importance

¹ *German History in Modern and Recent Times*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1970, pp. 105, 106, 145 (in Russian).

² *The Position of the Working Class in the Capitalist Countries Over Twenty Years (1917-1937)*, pp. 148-49.

³ Allen Hutt, *The Condition of the Working Class in Britain*, London, s.a., p. 45.

⁴ Yu. V. Yegorov, *The Popular Front in France*, Leningrad, 1972, p. 160 (in Russian).

to the working masses was that regarding holidays, which guaranteed any worker who had worked at least one year two-weeks paid leave during the summer season. In August 1936, millions of the French working people enjoyed the right to paid leave for the first time.

During the years that the Popular Front was in power the French working class made large strides forward. Maurice Thorez wrote: "The victory of the Popular Front and the workers' action in June have given the working class a deep sense of its own value and dignity. The collective agreements, the new system of shop-floor delegates, recognition of trade union rights, the authority of the General Confederation of Labour and its militants have done away with the atmosphere of inhibitions and fear"¹.

The working class found itself in a particularly grim situation in those countries where fascists were in power. In Italy, before the Second World War, real wages for all categories of workers were between 10 and 25 per cent lower than they had been in 1921. The number of unemployed in Italy even in good years for the economy never dropped lower than 500,000. In addition to the army of those permanently unemployed there were large numbers of workers only partially employed in industry, and particularly in agriculture.²

In Germany, as early as 1933, the nazi government decided to freeze wage rates at the crisis level of 1932. Wide use was made of over-time work. A ten-hour day was introduced, and later even a twelve-hour working day.³ The immediate result of the growing intensification of labour, the longer working hours and the predatory exploitation of the work-force was that during the twelve years of nazi rule industrial accidents among insured German workers rose by almost 70 per cent.⁴

In the Third Reich, the working class was stripped of all economic and political rights. It lost its freedom of movement, freedom of choice of trades and places of employment, and also the right to strike. In 1935, compulsory labour service was introduced for young people and in 1938 it was extended to the whole population. Labour legislation was geared completely to supply the needs of the war effort, and a number of laws were passed to mobilise the work-force as rapidly as possible to prepare for war. The strictest control over the behaviour and attitudes of the working class was established.

The fascist dictatorship was an instrument for the perpetration of monstrous class terror and violence. The physical elimination of the

¹ *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Vol. 13, Book 3, Paris, 1954, p. 161.

² See, for example, *La classe operaia durante il fascismo*, Milan, 1981.

³ D. Eichholtz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft. 1939-1945*, Vol. 1, 1939-1941, Berlin, 1969, p. 77.

⁴ A. A. Galkin, *German Fascism*, Moscow, 1967, p. 224 (in Russian).

progressive section of the proletariat, the banning of working-class political parties and trade unions, the abrogation of elementary democratic rights and freedoms—all this during the years of fascist rule reduced to nothing the important achievements scored after long years of struggle waged by German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese working people.

As revealed by this survey of the main aspects of the position of the working class in the capitalist countries between 1924 and 1939 the gap between the potentialities for satisfying the needs of the working people through capitalist production and the actual conditions experienced by the working people continued to grow.

LEVELS OF STRUGGLE AND ORGANISATION

The level of struggle waged by the working class was determined to a large extent by the level of its class consciousness. Lenin considered that one of the major tasks before the international communist movement was the need to “soberly follow the *actual* state of the class consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the *working people* (not only of their advanced elements)”.¹ In his *Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International* Lenin stressed: “We must learn to approach the masses with particular patience and caution so as to be able to understand the distinctive features in the mentality of each stratum, calling, etc., of these masses.”²

The social consciousness of any class is the product of lengthy historical development. Earlier stages in the struggle of the working class and its past experience consolidated within the framework of specific traditions left their mark on the class consciousness of the various detachments of the proletariat. “The spirit of the French Revolution”, to use Marx’ expression, helped, for example, to strengthen revolutionary ideals in the consciousness of the French proletariat and to spread socialist ideology among wide sectors of the working people. In the United States, on the other hand, the social and emotional atmosphere within society was permeated by the cult of individualism and personal success. This cult exerted a powerful influence on substantial sections of the working class, thus providing the social and psychological preconditions for wider penetration of the labour movement by bourgeois ideology.

Specific manifestations of the socio-economic contradictions inherent in capitalism also had an impact on the consciousness of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1982, p. 58.

² V. I. Lenin, “Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 192.

proletariat. The moods of the main mass of workers in the period of the world crisis from 1929 to 1933 were characterised, for example, by indignant protest against the unabashed cynicism and cruelty of capitalist exploitation.

The inclusion of new detachments in the army of wage workers also served to mould the consciousness of the working class. The proletarianisation of society, which raised the number and enhanced the power of potential opponents of the capitalist order, at the same time led to "splits" in the working class and the emergence of a large number of "sub-groups" within the proletariat, who had divergent political orientations, socio-psychological attitudes and techniques for action.

The increase in the number of workers employed in the retail network and the services sector also had a certain impact on the social attitudes of the proletariat, because in that sphere class contradictions did not come so clearly to the fore, and conditions for revolutionary training and consolidation of the workers' army were less favourable.

The transformation of the social attitudes of new generations of workers was a long process which demanded "varying amount of energy, attention and time"¹ on the part of the industrial workers and their political vanguard who devoted their efforts to foster revolutionary consciousness among new strata of the work-force and at the same time to protect other workers from the influence of bourgeois ideas.

The construction of socialism in the Soviet Union was to exert an all-important influence on the ideological climate in the capitalist world. The emergence of the Soviet working class on the international arena as a class organised into a state was an event of tremendous importance. Maurice Thorez wrote: "The Soviet Union represents for the workers in the capitalist countries creative labour, liberty, culture, happiness and joy. The Soviet Union is the country of worker heroes emulating Stakhanov, and it is the country of scientist heroes, peace-loving conquerors of the Pole. The Soviet Union is truly the country of Man the Fortunate."² The appreciation by the broad masses of the working people in the capitalist countries of the fact that in the Soviet Union the workers themselves were administering their state, were themselves masters of their own destiny, filled them with resolution to fight against the inhuman system of capitalist exploitation, and it helped to spread the ideals of socialism and to enhance the authority of communist parties.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, 1977, p. 348.

² *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Vol. 14, Book 3, p. 184.

At the same time, the working class was subjected to tremendous ideological pressure from the bourgeoisie. The ruling classes had for a long time been painting a slanderous picture of the revolutionary proletariat, describing its members as "enemies of the state", "traitors", "stateless vagabonds", "criminals", etc. After the victory of the Great October Revolution the main emphasis of anti-communist propaganda was placed on the Soviet Union. For all opponents of socialism this hostility towards the Soviet Union soon became a trademark distinguishing the essence of their reactionary policies and ideology. Waves of anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda at various periods were directed against specific strata of the working class. A communist worker from Sweden when recalling that period, commented: "The workers became the easy target of bourgeois propaganda. Even in the social democratic press Communists were depicted as lunatic advocates of extreme measures who were merely waiting for the right moment to make Sweden part of the Soviet Union."¹

The uneven economic and political development in the capitalist world, the differences in the position in which certain detachments of the proletariat found themselves and differences in the levels of their consciousness gave rise to the existence within the labour movement of a variety of ideological trends. Various detachments of the working people were drawn into the revolutionary movement at different times. In the common consciousness of the broad masses of the proletariat there were often to be found a broad range of Marxist, anarcho-syndicalist, reformist, and even bourgeois ideas. However, even within this multicoloured kaleidoscope of various ideological trends and attitudes, the main trend in the international working class was that towards the enhancement of the proletariat's class consciousness.

This higher level of class consciousness among the proletariat was first achieved in the communist movement which united the most progressive revolutionary workers. By this time, the concept "revolutionary" had become tantamount to the concept "Communist". The growth of the communist movement was marked by the consolidation of its ideological unity on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and also by the improved level of all the ideological work carried out by communist parties. The Communist International which had become the international centre for both revolutionary ideas and action, collated the international experience of class struggle, opposed the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie world-wide, which constituted an essential precondition for the discharge by the proletariat of its historic mission.

¹ A. Rundberg, op. cit., p. 45.

The communist parties also enjoyed the support of a good number of working people who had not yet adopted Marxist-Leninist principles but who, as a rule, were members of revolutionary trade unions or who constituted left trends in mass organisations. Their irreconcilable hatred for capitalism, their loyalty to socialist ideals, their proletarian solidarity and readiness to take part in class battles—such were the typical traits that distinguished the social attitudes of such groups of working people.

Reformist trends in the labour movement were represented by the social democratic parties, which came together in the Labour and Socialist International (LSI). The majority of the influential parties in the LSI adhered to reformist views. The dominant right wing within this movement propagated reformist socialism and openly expressed its hostility towards revolution. The centrist and left leaders within it, although they declared their support for Marxism and protested against the extreme behaviour of the opportunists, yet all in all they pursued reformist policies and were infected with anti-communist and anti-Soviet ideas.

In the period under discussion the influence of anarcho-syndicalism within the labour movement of Western Europe began to decline. This pointed, among other things, to the fact that an appreciation of the importance of political action for the defence of everyday demands and for the struggle to achieve social liberation had taken firm root by this time in the consciousness of the vast majority of workers.

Substantial sections of the working people were, however, still under the influence of bourgeois parties. Moreover, the spread of fascism and particularly the establishment of a nazi regime in Germany showed that part of the working people could fall prey to the pressure of fascist ideology.

Yet all in all, the working class scored indisputable success in its efforts to gain ideological and political independence: it had been able to express the interests of social development and to lead all the democratic forces in society, as was illustrated most graphically by the experience of the Popular Front in France and the Spanish Civil War. These successes provided the ideological precondition necessary so that the working class might subsequently play the leading role in the resistance movements against fascism and in the national liberation fronts.

During this period the level of both economic and political struggle waged by the working class reached new heights. The progress of the strike movement in the years of partial stabilisation of capitalism is illustrated in Table 9 and also in Table 10 (1929-1939).

Also, after the decline in the revolutionary tide had begun, the proletariat continued to wage its struggle against the onslaught of

Table 9

The Strike Movement in the Capitalist Countries in 1924-1928

| Country | 1924 | | | 1925 | | | 1926 | | | 1927 | | | 1928 | | |
|---------------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-------|---------|------|-----|--------|------|-----|--------|
| | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III |
| Austria | 426 | 294 | 2,770 | 314 | 66 | 1,152 | 179 | 21 | 74 | 216 | 35 | 687 | 266 | 38 | 658 |
| Belgium | 188 | 84 | | 112 | 82 | | 140 | 77 | | 186 | 45 | 1,659 | 192 | 78 | 2,254 |
| Great Britain | 710 | 613 | 8,424 | 603 | 441 | 7,952 | 323 | 2,734 | 162,233 | 308 | 108 | 1,174 | 302 | 124 | 1,388 |
| Germany | 1,614 | 682 | 13,584 | 1,541 | 510 | 11,268 | 339 | 60 | 869 | 759 | 232 | 2,946 | 691 | 329 | 8,520 |
| Italy* | 361 | 183 | | 614 | 304 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Canada | 70 | 34 | 1,295 | 87 | 29 | 1,193 | 77 | 24 | 267 | 74 | 22 | 153 | 98 | 18 | 224 |
| Netherlands | 239 | 27 | 3,156 | 262 | 32 | 781 | 212 | 9 | 281 | 230 | 14 | 220 | 205 | 17 | 648 |
| USA | 1,249 | 655 | | 1,301 | 428 | | 1,035 | 330 | | 707 | 330 | 26,219 | 604 | 314 | 12,632 |
| France | 1,083 | 275 | 3,863 | 931 | 249 | 2,046 | 1,660 | 349 | 4,072 | 396 | 110 | 1,046 | 816 | 204 | 6,377 |
| Sweden | 261 | 24 | 1,204 | 239 | 146 | 2,560 | 206 | 53 | 1,711 | 189 | 9 | 400 | 201 | 71 | 4,835 |
| Japan | 333 | 54 | 638 | 292 | 39 | 351 | 495 | 67 | 122 | 383 | 47 | 1,177 | 397 | 46 | 584 |

Note: I - number of strikes, II - number of strikers (in thousands), III - number of lost working days (in thousands).
 * After 1926 strikes and lock-outs were banned by the fascist regime. Some figures which were published later did not reflect the true scale of the strike movement, as the figures showed the number of workers who were subsequently prosecuted.
 Source: The Strike Movement of the Working People (Late 19th Century to 1970s), Statistics, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

Table 10

The Strike Movement in the Capitalist Countries in 1929-1939

| Country | 1929 | | | 1930 | | | 1931 | | | 1932 | | | 1933 | | | 1934 | | |
|---------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III |
| Austria | 226 | 30 | 388 | 88 | 7 | 49 | 68 | 10 | 133 | 33 | 7 | 190 | 27 | 6 | 79 | 4 | 137 | |
| Belgium | 168 | 61 | 799 | 93 | 65 | 782 | 74 | 23 | 399 | 63 | 163 | 581 | 87 | 39 | 664 | 79 | 37 | 2,441 |
| Great Britain | 431 | 533 | 8,287 | 422 | 307 | 4,399 | 420 | 490 | 6,983 | 389 | 379 | 6,488 | 357 | 136 | 1,072 | 471 | 134 | 959 |
| Germany | 431 | 151 | 1,852 | 345 | 208 | 3,602 | 473 | 137 | 1,572 | 643 | 129 | 1,127 | | | | | | |
| Canada | 90 | 13 | 152 | 67 | 14 | 92 | 88 | 11 | 204 | 116 | 23 | 255 | 125 | 27 | 318 | 191 | 46 | 575 |
| Netherlands | 226 | 17 | 991 | 217 | 11 | 273 | 215 | 21 | 856 | 216 | 32 | 1,773 | 184 | 13 | 534 | 152 | 6 | 114 |
| USA | 921 | 289 | 5,352 | 637 | 183 | 3,317 | 810 | 342 | 6,893 | 841 | 324 | 10,502 | 1,695 | 1,168 | 16,872 | 1,856 | 1,467 | 592 |
| France | 1,213 | 240 | 2,765 | 1,093 | 582 | 7,209 | 286 | 48 | 950 | 362 | 72 | 2,244 | 343 | 87 | 1,199 | 385 | 101 | 2,393 |
| Sweden | 180 | 13 | 667 | 261 | 21 | 1,021 | 193 | 41 | 2,627 | 182 | 50 | 3,095 | 140 | 32 | 3,434 | 103 | 14 | 760 |
| Japan | 576 | 77 | 572 | 907 | 81 | 1,085 | 998 | 65 | 980 | 893 | 55 | 619 | 610 | 49 | 385 | 626 | 50 | 446 |

| Country | 1935 | | | 1936 | | | 1937 | | | 1938 | | | 1939 | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III | I | II | III |
| Austria | 3 | | | 5 | 1 | | 2 | 5 | | — | — | — | | | |
| Belgium | 150 | 104 | 623 | 999 | 565 | | 209 | 82 | 648 | 126 | 33 | 241 | 68 | 46 | 157 |
| Great Britain | 553 | 271 | 1,955 | 818 | 216 | 1,829 | 1,129 | 597 | 3,413 | 875 | 274 | 1,334 | 940 | 337 | 1,356 |
| Canada | 120 | 33 | 284 | 156 | 35 | 277 | 278 | 72 | 886 | 147 | 20 | 149 | 122 | 41 | 225 |
| Netherlands | 152 | 12 | 262 | 96 | 10 | 95 | 95 | 5 | 39 | 141 | 6 | 136 | 90 | 5 | 97 |
| USA | 2,014 | 1,117 | 15,456 | 2,172 | 789 | 13,902 | 4,740 | 1,861 | 28,422 | 2,772 | 688 | 9,148 | 2,613 | 1,171 | 17,812 |
| France | 376 | 109 | 1,182 | 16,907 | 2,423 | — | 2,616 | 324 | — | 1,220 | 1,333 | — | — | — | — |
| Sweden | 98 | 17 | 788 | 60 | 3 | 438 | 67 | 31 | 861 | 85 | 29 | 1,284 | 45 | 2 | 159 |
| Japan | 590 | 38 | 301 | 547 | 31 | 163 | 628 | 124 | 338 | 262 | 18 | 41 | 358 | 73 | 35 |

Note: I - number of strikes, II - number of strikers (in thousands), III - number of lost working days (in thousands).
 Source: The Strike Movement of the Working People (Late 19th Century to 1970s), Statistics, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

the capitalists and reactionaries. Workers often organised political strikes. Some major economic strikes developed into political action. An example of this trend is provided by the General Strike of 1926 in Britain, an impressive example of the creative revolutionary potential of the working people. In the course of that struggle action committees consisting of representatives from the political, economic, trade union, and cooperative organisations of the working class were set up, many of which carried out local administration during the period of the strike.

The changes that had come about in the nature of production and its technology brought forth new forms of strikes. More and more examples were to be found of "chess-board" strikes; first one shop in a factory would strike and then another, and so on. This meant that an enterprise would cease to produce anything for a long period.

In many countries so-called Italian strikes often became the order of the day: workers remained on the spot but virtually did not work.

In the 1930s the strike movement in the capitalist countries developed at different rates from one country to another. It is revealing to note that even during the world economic crisis of 1929-1933 the strike movement not only did not come to a standstill, but in certain years assumed an impressive scale and became more effective than before. In France, between 1930 and 1933, for example, workers scored major successes: in 1930, 30 per cent of the strikes ended in victory, while in 1931 and 1932 approximately 60 per cent of the strikes were successful.¹ In Japan, between 1926 and 1929, 39.9 per cent strikes ended in defeat, but this figure dropped to 34.1 per cent in the period 1930-1934, and further still to 18.9 per cent for the years 1935-1938.²

The social composition of the strike movement also changed over this period to embrace wider social strata: white-collar workers from government organisations, the services sector and municipal organisations took an active part in it. The strike movement acquired an offensive rather than defensive character.

A new aspect of the strike confrontations of those years was the support afforded by the unemployed to the strikers. During the hardest years of the economic crisis in the United States, Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Poland, and other countries the unemployed gave their active support to strikes, demonstrations and other actions organised by the proletariat. These joint protests undermined the attempts by the bourgeoisie to use the unemployed as strike-breakers. Without this united action the strikes during those years of crisis could not have been successful.

¹ J. Bruhat, M. Piolot, *Esquisse d'une histoire de la C.G.T.*, 1958, Paris, p. 124.

² *Labour under Capitalism*, p. 880.

A new form of the proletarian struggle which now emerged was the mass movement of the unemployed. The ranks of the unemployed waged a struggle against the capitalists' attempts to curtail their unemployment benefits, against the government's extraordinary decrees introduced to reduce their benefits. They put forward demands that the increasing number of workers be insured, provided with work, afforded assistance during winter months, made exempt from paying rent and provided with free coal and gas. They also protested against evictions, organised demonstrations, hunger marches, and submitted petitions to the authorities.¹

The level of professional organisation that the working class had now achieved was considerably higher than before. While on the eve of the First World War trade union membership had totalled close on 14 million members, by 1939 this figure had risen to 60 million. The percentage of workers organised in trade unions rose over this period from 10 to 30.

In the past the trade unions, although they had been the most numerous working-class organisations, had catered mainly for skilled workers. In the 1920s and 1930s in almost all advanced capitalist countries an influx into the unions of non-skilled and semi-skilled workers was to be observed.

The organisational principles and work methods of the trade unions had also undergone noticeable changes. The transition from organisation based on separate work-shops to the production principle had been ubiquitous: even in Britain the work-shop system had been thoroughly undermined. Trade unions embracing all the workers involved in a particular industry began to appear, although some of the old-style trade unions catering for individual trades still existed. In the United States where the work-shop system had previously predominated, the 1930s also saw a rapid rise in the number of unions catering for whole branches of industry.

In addition to these changes in the organisational structure of the trade unions there was now a stronger tendency towards centralisation of the union movement, i.e., national trade union centres began to play a more important role. Although territorial and branch associations of trade unions still retained their autonomy in many countries, the leading bodies of national trade union centres gradually assumed more authority, so that their decisions were regarded as binding. The range of questions coming under the jurisdiction of national trade union centres was also growing.

As a result of the ever closer links between the economic and political demands of the working people better opportunities appeared for the political training of trade unionists, although the campaigns

¹ J. Bruhat, M. Piolot, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

to make the most of these opportunities proceeded against the background of a hard struggle. The bourgeoisie went out of its way to link more closely the trade unions to the bourgeois parties and the state and at the same time to exploit the political differences which existed in the labour movement in order to undermine the class solidarity of trade union members and to split the trade union movement. These tactics achieved some results: the positive growth in the unions' membership, the trend from work-shops to industry-based unions and more active participation in political life were all impeded by splits in the union movement.

The political organisation of the working class had nevertheless reached a higher level: the membership of workers' parties and their influence had grown considerably. Prior to the First World War the social democratic parties had a membership of approximately 3,400,000, but by the end of the 1930s there were 1,700,000 Communists and over 6 million Social Democrats in the capitalist countries.

In the mid-1920s and the 1930s the importance and the role of *international associations of mass organisations of working people* were also enhanced to a considerable degree.¹

Important changes took place in the international trade union movement in which a number of trade union centres were active: the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern), the Amsterdam International (the International Federation of Trade Unions—IFTU), the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) (Berlin Trade Union International, an anarcho-syndicalist association), the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU).

The Red International of Labour Unions, which worked together with the Comintern, provided the rallying-point for revolutionary trade unions. In 1928, the Profintern had a total membership of 17 million. It was also supported by a further 3 million members of the revolutionary minority in reformist trade unions. The Profintern made a major contribution to the drive to improve the proletariat's organisation, and to extend and consolidate the solidarity between its various national contingents.

The Profintern assumed the leadership of the mass strike movement, encouraged the protests of the unemployed, and was involved in campaigns against fascist terror. It also carried out large-scale work to enhance unity among working people and organisation of mutual assistance between various groups of workers. Considerable attention was devoted to the trade union movement in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In this work the Profintern emphasised the duty of the trade unions in the advanced capitalist

¹ These include non-party mass organisations of working people. The work of the Communist International and the Labour and Socialist International are discussed in subsequent chapters of this volume.

countries actively to campaign for the independence of the peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies. In a resolution passed by the 3rd Profintern Congress it was stated: "The revolutionary unions of the Metropolis should give the greatest support to the unions organizing in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. *The work among the colonial workers should be conducted under the slogan of the independence of the colonies...* The more intensive the struggle of the revolutionary unions for independence of the colonies, the less suspicious will the colonial workers be towards their brethren in the Metropolis."¹

In its campaign to achieve unity within the trade union movement, to bring together workers of all political persuasions, all races and nationalities in a great international army of labour, the Profintern stressed: "Our struggle must proceed under the slogan calling for the *amalgamation* of the Profintern, the Amsterdam International and the Pan-American Federation of Labour in a single International that embraces the trade unions of all countries, all races, and all continents. An International of this kind can be set up with the help of an *international unity congress*, in which the trade unions must take part, both those which belong to existing Internationals and also those outside them."² Although the reformists rejected these proposals, the Profintern did not slacken its efforts to achieve trade union unity. In the 1930s many red trade unions joined forces with trade unions that were dominated by Social Democrats.³ This contributed to greater consolidation of the trade union movement. In 1937, the leadership of the Profintern, bearing in mind the above-mentioned positive developments and the need to further the unification of the trade union movement, decided to disband itself.

The Profintern took part in setting up and promoting the activities of a number of international associations of working people. These included the *International Workers' Relief*—an organisation promoting proletarian solidarity, whose main job was to support the class and national liberation struggle of working people in the capitalist and dependent countries.

In the capitalist countries the International Workers' Relief was subjected to severe harassment and to slanderous attacks in the reactionary press. The International Workers' Relief found itself in a particularly difficult position after the nazis came to power in Germany, the country where it had hitherto been based. In 1935, the

¹ *Resolutions and Decisions. Third World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions. Held in Moscow, July 1924, Chicago, w.d., p. 14.*

² *Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale, Held in Moscow, March 9-11, 1926, Berlin, w.d., pp. 133-34.*

³ B. M. Leibzon, K. K. Shirinya, *A Turnabout in Comintern Policy. The Historical Importance of the 7th Comintern Congress, Moscow, 1975, p. 378 (in Russian).*

International Workers' Relief was reorganised to become a special commission of the Comintern.¹

It was in similar conditions that a second organisation—*The International Red Aid (IRA)*—was forced to work. In 1927, in the 44 sections of this organisation outside the USSR there was a total of 4,200,000 members. In the USSR its members numbered over 3,500,000.² The IRA provided relief for victims of repression, and it also supported and defended the rights of political prisoners in the capitalist countries, fostered the struggle to set up a united front of the proletariat.³ In 1929, it helped set up the International Legal Association which embraced progressive lawyers from many countries. Lawyers, who were members of the association, everywhere provided legal aid for political prisoners and their families.

The Red Sport International also played an active part in the international arena: its objective was to encourage sporting activities among the world's revolutionary workers. It had close on 2,145,000 members, of whom 2 million were Soviet workers.⁴

The Profintern also maintained close links with such organisations as the International of Free Thinking Proletarians, the International Cooperative Alliance, and other international associations.

The Amsterdam International, which worked along the same lines as the Labour and Socialist International, pursued a policy of class collaboration. The charter, adopted at the 3rd Congress of the Amsterdam International in 1924, proclaimed that its main task was to work for better social legislation throughout the world and for better education for workers.

During the world-wide economic crisis (1929-1933) the leadership of the Amsterdam International, under pressure from the masses, put forward a series of specific demands: for higher wages, for a forty-hour working week, for increased unemployment benefits, etc. However, it did not see the way to these goals as lying via the activities of the working people themselves but rather via utilisation of the mechanism of the bourgeois state, via development of the system of national and international arbitration headed by the ILO. The leaders of the Amsterdam International virtually ignored the trade union movement outside Europe. Only three non-European trade union associations (from Argentina, Canada, and Palestine) were mem-

¹ D. Michev, *International Workers' Relief, an Organisation for Proletarian Solidarity, 1921-1935*, Moscow, 1971 (in Russian).

² A. I. Avrus, *The IRA in the Struggle against Terror and Fascism, 1922-1939*, Saratov, 1976, p. 81 (in Russian).

³ Clara Zetkin, *Ten Years of the IRA*, Moscow, 1932; E. D. Stasova, *Ten Years of the IRA*, Moscow, 1933; F. Kon, *How the IRA Was Founded*, Moscow, 1932 (all in Russian).

⁴ *Short Encyclopaedia of the International Trade Union Movement*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 623-27 (in Russian).

bers of the Amsterdam International. The reluctance of this International to defend the interests of the working class undermined its influence. In 1920, it had 23 million members, but by 1926 this figure had dropped to 13,300,000.¹

The International Workingmen's Association (the Berlin Trade Union International). The main support for this anarcho-syndicalist organisation came from Spain, Portugal and Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico). Its groups were also to be found in France, Germany, Holland, Scandinavia and a number of other countries. In 1924, of the 400,000 members of the Berlin International 200,000 were from the Spanish National Confederation of Labour, and 50,000 from the CGT in Portugal, and 60,000 were members of FORA in Argentina. In 1928, the membership of the Berlin International dropped to 162,000.² Later the International Workingmen's Association was to become no more than an amalgamation of small anarcho-syndicalist groups.

The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) which based its action on the conception of class collaboration sought to encourage settlement of conflicts between workers and management within the framework of state institutions. Despite the stand of their leadership the members of these Christian unions often engaged in strike activity, working hand in hand with other sections of the proletariat. The inability of Christian syndicalists consistently and effectively to uphold the interests of the oppressed classes led to their isolation from the broad masses. Between 1920 and 1937, the Federation's membership dropped from 3,600,000 to 1,500,000. In May 1940, it ceased to exist.³

The women's movement: working women constituted a large section of the international working class. In the period under discussion there was a marked rise in the influence of Communists in the women's labour movement. The consistent organisational structure and ideological methods used by the communist parties among working women included meetings of women's delegates and action committees, inspection committees, women's circles and schools, community centres and meeting places in private homes and in factories. An international women's magazine, known as *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale*, began to appear.

In accordance with the decision reached at the 4th Profintern Congress (1928), an International Trade Union Committee of Working

¹ *The History of the International Labour and National Liberation Movements*, Part II (1917-1939), Moscow, 1969, p. 648 (in Russian).

² W. Z. Foster, *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, New York, 1956, p. 279.

³ M. Y. Domnich, *An Outline History of Christian Syndicalism*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 139-42 (in Russian).

Women was set up with members from twelve countries, four of whom had been delegated by Soviet trade unions. In order to accelerate work on questions connected with women's labour a Secretariat for this committee was also set up.

The movement of communist women exerted a powerful influence on all sections of the international women's movement and spurred on the struggle of women throughout the world, which became particularly active in the 1930s, when the women's communist movement began using more flexible methods for establishing contact and working alongside revolutionary, social democratic, pacifist, progressive anti-war and anti-fascist women's organisations in the common struggle.

In 1930, the Comintern held an International Women's Conference of the various countries of Europe at which tactics were elaborated for the struggle against war.¹

In August 1934, a World Congress of Women against War and Fascism was held in Paris. Its 1,096 delegates represented the many millions involved in the women's anti-fascist and anti-war movement which united in its ranks fighters of various political persuasions, ideologies and creeds. The congress set up an International Women's Committee against War and Fascism which campaigned actively until September 1939.

The reformist trend in the women workers' movement was represented by the International Socialist Women's Secretariat working under the leadership of Social Democrats from several countries. The Amsterdam International set up an International Working Women's Committee and under the auspices of the London Cooperative Alliance, an International Women's Cooperative Guild.

The movement of working youth: the international struggle of young workers was led by young Communists. In July 1924, the 4th Congress of the Communist Youth International (CYI) decided to concentrate its activities on the ideological and organisational consolidation of young communist leagues, so as to make these truly Leninist organisations able to lead forward the wide masses of young people. The work of the Communist Youth International sections in factories, trade unions, urban districts, schools, and various mass organisations took a new lease of life.

The Communist Youth International achieved noticeable successes in the campaign to form a united anti-fascist front for young people. In the spring of 1933, it approached the leadership of the Socialist Youth International (SYI) with the suggestion that joint opposition

¹ *The Women's Communist Movement in the Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1931 (in Russian).

to fascist reaction should be organised. This proposal was widely supported by socialist youth.

In September 1933, a World Youth Congress against War and Fascism was held in Paris, at which for the first time since the First World War representatives of communist, socialist, Christian and bourgeois youth organisations came together.¹

The International Youth Conference for Peace, Freedom and Progress in Paris in April 1935, came out in favour of a World Youth Alliance and on convening, for this purpose, an international meeting. In June 1935, representatives of the Communist, Socialist and Christian Youth International, the World Student Committee to Combat War and Fascism and other organisations arrived in Geneva, in order to demand from the then current session of the ILO, which was discussing the problems of youth unemployment, energetic steps to put a stop to this social evil. Thus, for the first time representatives of the leading international youth associations came together and spoke with a common voice.

The 6th Congress of the Communist Youth International, held in September-October 1935, attended by Komsomol members from 52 countries representing the 223,500 members of communist youth organisations in the capitalist world and the 3,500,000 members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League from the Soviet Union,² came out in favour of cooperation between communist and socialist youth organisations and of setting up a single united Youth International.³ CYI supported the suggestion from the International Association for Friends of the League of Nations to convene a World Youth Congress in Geneva. Although the leaders of SYI and certain of its sections preferred not to participate in the First World Youth Peace Congress that was held in August-September 1936 in Geneva, it proved a most representative occasion: it was attended by 700 delegates from 36 countries and 11 international organisations.⁴ The Congress delegates issued an appeal to the youth of all countries to unite their efforts in the defence of peace.

At the end of December the Committee, since renamed the Council for the World Youth Congress, issued an appeal to make 1937 a year of a campaign for peace by young people through the propagation and championing of principles approved by the Congress: due consideration for international voluntary obligations; the organisation

¹ *Against War and Fascism. Documents from the World Youth Congress Against War and Fascism, Paris, September 22-24, 1933*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 23-24 (in Russian).

² *The Comintern, CYI and the Youth Movement (1919-1943)*. Collected Documents, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1977, p. 306 (in Russian).

³ *Youth in the Struggle for United Front*. Materials from the 6th World Congress of the CYI, Moscow, 1938, pp. 155-59 (in Russian).

⁴ M. Wolf, *The World Youth Congress*, Moscow, 1936, pp. 16-20 (in Russian).

of collective security and disarmament; the unification of all youth movements against any kind of aggression, wherever it might come from.¹ The appeals of the Congress and its permanent headquarters met with a wide-scale response: within a mere two years from the time when the Congress was convened national peace committees for young people had appeared in 26 countries.²

The Second World Youth Congress in Vassar College (near New York) in August 1938 was attended by delegates from 54 countries representing 40,000,000 young peace supporters from five continents.³ The resolution passed by this Congress, known as the Vassar Pact, contained an appeal for young people to unite and mobilise public opinion against military aggression.⁴

The CYI worked hard to organise in a number of countries campaigns for solidarity with the Spanish anti-fascists. In April 1937, the leadership of the SYI Executive Committee after numerous requests from the Juventud Socialista Unificada (United Socialist Youth) in Spain and from CYI decided to join the International Committee for Relief for Spanish Youth and to work hand in hand with the World Youth Peace Congress.⁵ After the shift by the SYI to a policy of cooperation, almost all the major international youth associations, apart from the Catholic ones which had previously already manifested inconsistent vacillation in their activities,⁶ were drawn into the movement to combat fascism and to uphold peace, freedom and progress. The closer collaboration between communist and socialist youth led to the emergence of joint organisations in a large number of countries.

The drive by the CYI to achieve united action against fascism gave rise to an enormous growth in the communist youth organisations throughout the world. In the five years between 1934 and 1939 the membership of CYI sections and affiliated organisations (not counting the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League) had risen from 110,000 to 746,000.⁷

¹ *The Comintern, CYI and the Youth Movement (1919-1943)*, Vol. 2, pp. 189-90.

² *The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. An Outline History*, Vol. 1, (1918-1941), Moscow, 1969, p. 580 (in Russian).

³ *The Main Stages in the International Youth Movement (1880s-1970s)*, Moscow, 1976, p. 36 (in Russian).

⁴ *International Solidarity of the Working People in the Fight for Peace and National Liberation, against Fascist Aggression and the Campaign to Wipe Out Fascism in Europe and Asia (1938-1945)*, Moscow, 1962, p. 90 (in Russian).

⁵ M. Wolf, *Three Years' Fight to Unite Working Youth*, Moscow, 1938, pp. 18-19 (in Russian).

⁶ The Christian Youth International did not take part in the work of the Second World Youth Congress in 1938.

⁷ *The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. An Outline History*, Vol. 1, (1918-1941), p. 580.

The selfless work by the organisations of the CYI made possible closer cooperation between progressive forces in the youth movement and in particular between the detachments of young workers, and also served to mobilise millions of young people to join the anti-war and anti-fascist struggle, thus exerting a considerable influence on the course of historical events.

The membership of the SYI numbered 179,700 in 1926,¹ but had reached 287,000 by 1939.² This movement was virtually confined to the European continent. The SYI was not part of the Labour and Socialist International but in general terms followed its policies. The SYI maintained close contacts with the Amsterdam International. During the 1930s left currents became stronger within the broad masses of socialist youth, despite discouragement from the right-wing leadership of the LWI and SYI, as did the urge to engage in joint action with young Communists.

In 1937, the SYI agreed to discussions with the CYI and engaged in certain joint activities of young workers' organisations and associations of democratic youth. This enabled the leadership of the SYI to exert a certain amount of control over its own detachments, but in practice it was not prepared to engage in any active fight against fascism. During the first months of the war the SYI ceased to exist.

The so-called Christian, or Catholic, Youth International embraced national federations of young people from 25 countries, totalling almost 3 million.

In 1924 in Belgium, and in other countries in the years that followed, associations for young Christian workers were organised, so-called JOC groups (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*), and by the end of the 1920s organisations for rural youth, which were usually represented in larger national and international associations. The leaders of JOC declared that the aim of their members was "to re-Christianise the masses led astray by materialist socialism".³ At the same time pressure from the masses forced the leaders of JOC to come forward with specific social demands. Some local JOC organisations, particularly in France, were prepared to engage in contacts with socialist and communist youth.

The left opposition to the leadership in the Catholic youth movement drew its support from the World Catholic Youth League. This organisation, using the slogan "Catholics of the World, Unite!", to a large extent reflected the pacifist mood of a part of the youth move-

¹ G. Konrad, *The Socialist Youth International*, Moscow, 1931, p. 19 (in Russian).

² R. Luza, *History of the International Socialist Youth Movement*, Leyden, 1970, p. 54.

³ F. Godefroid, *Le Jocrisme*, Bruxelles, 1930, p. 11.

ment. Members of the organisation supported certain actions by communist parties against militarism and the arms race.

In the 1930s, many of the Catholic rank and file, despite official pronouncements from the Vatican, joined the international youth movement against war and fascism, and in support of peace and international cooperation. At the First World Youth Peace Congress in 1936 its representatives accepted as a possibility cooperation with Communists.

In the 1920s and 1930s, rapid growth of the *cooperative movement* was to be observed world-wide. On the eve of the Second World War cooperative members numbered over 143,000,000.

An important development was the decision of Soviet cooperatives to join the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). The work by representatives of Soviet cooperatives and communist cooperative members from other countries had a considerable impact on the development of the cooperative movement world-wide in a truly proletarian direction. Although the Communists constituted a minority within the organisations of the ICA, their ideas and views gained ground within the cooperative movement. The leadership of the ICA who initially gave a hostile reception to the demand that the principle of "political neutrality" be dropped, was obliged later on to make amendments to its overall policy. In 1927, the ICA Congress in Stockholm, and later, in 1928, the meetings of its Executive Committee considered the question of how best the cooperative organisations should hold back the capitalist trusts, monopolies and their international associations. In 1930, the ICA Congress in Vienna passed a resolution condemning the exploitation of consumers by capitalist cartels and trusts, and calling upon cooperative workers to demand that the activities of the monopolies be subjected to inspection. The ICA leadership turned to the League of Nations with the request that its representatives might take part in the International Disarmament Conference in Geneva (1932) and this request was granted.

In 1933 and 1936, the ICA appealed to the cooperatives to uphold their rights and freedoms and to join forces so as to protect the cooperative organisations. In a resolution adopted at the extraordinary ICA Conference in Basel in June 1933, it was stressed that peace was the goal of the international cooperative movement and the main condition for the rehabilitation of the economy, and the principle of solidarity between cooperative members in the fight against reaction was held aloft as the movement's guiding principle.¹ The representatives of the ICA attended the peace conference, held in Paris in

¹ W. P. Watkins, *The International Co-operative Alliance, 1895-1970*, London, 1970, p. 200.

1936, and in their speeches they called, among other things, for a reduction in the production of arms.

In 1937, the ICA Congress held in Prague rejected through a majority vote "political and religious neutrality" as the guiding principle for the cooperative movement and, in particular, as an essential condition for the admission of any individual cooperative organisation to the Alliance.

Major changes that had taken place in the structure of the working class and considerable improvements in the level of its class consciousness and organisation determined to a large extent the main characteristics of the labour movement as a whole during the period under discussion.

Chapter 4

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT DURING THE PERIOD OF TEMPORARY, PARTIAL STABILISATION OF CAPITALISM

CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION

The partial stabilisation of capitalism which began in the United States and certain other countries in 1922-1923 had spread after 1924 to almost the whole of the capitalist world. The economy of the capitalist countries had entered a phase of cyclical recovery, accompanied by growing concentration and centralisation of capital. As early as 1925 the index for world-wide industrial output was 20 per cent higher than the pre-war figure.

The rapid growth was observed in the economic might of the monopolies which concentrated the bulk of national production in all the main branches of industry. Giant monopolies appeared in the leading branches of industry: IG Farbenindustrie and Stahltrust in Germany, Imperial Chemical Industries in Britain, and big motor corporations such as Ford in the USA, Citroën and Renault in France. The concentration of capital also proceeded at a comparatively rapid pace in agriculture.

This period also saw the relative consolidation of bourgeois regimes. The failure of the direct attack against the capitalist order in a number of countries in the preceding period and the defeat of revolutionary action in Europe in 1923 were the major factors that had determined the shift to a phase of slower development for the revolutionary process and to consolidation of the capitalists' power.

This partial stabilisation also made itself felt in the international relations between the capitalist countries. As a result of the Versailles and Washington treaties the world had been redivided and apportioned on the basis of a new balance of power between the imperialist powers. The Dawes Plan which had been adopted in 1924 and which had relieved Germany of the need to make a major part of its reparation payments, gave rise to a temporary relaxation of the main contradictions between Germany and the victorious powers. At the

same time it should be noted that this plan stemmed from the intention to turn the Soviet Union into a market place for the manufactured goods produced in Germany and thereby to disrupt the industrialisation of the USSR. In accordance with the Locarno Agreements (October 1925) the imperialists of the Entente guaranteed the inviolability of Germany's western frontiers, but they refused to grant a similar guarantee with regard to its eastern borders, thereby indicating the direction in which German imperialists' ambitions for future expansion should be concentrated. This was a policy aimed at resolving contradictions between the imperialists by means of anti-Soviet conspiracy.

Partial stabilisation of capitalism went hand in hand also with greater ideological and political influence over the working people exerted by the bourgeoisie and social reformists and also with the spread of bourgeois parliamentary and reformist illusions among the masses. A rich soil for the seeds of such developments was provided by the boom in the capitalist economy, the improvement in the material position enjoyed by certain sections of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and the rise in wages for certain sections of the working class.¹

These features of the partial stabilisation of capitalism which did not reflect all the profound contradictions inherent in its development were interpreted by bourgeois ideologists and politicians as the dawning of an era of "eternal prosperity" that would do away with the contradictions between classes. Henry Ford who had become a leading spokesman for the bourgeoisie, insisted that capitalists and workers had now become partners: the former invest money in production and the latter thought and energy: "Theirs is a cooperation based ... on common interest in the job to be done."² Bourgeois ideologists maintained that capitalism's wounds had healed once and for all, that it was no longer threatened by revolutionary upheavals and that all social problems would come more and more to be resolved through "constructive methods" and by means of compromise.

The Social Democrats regarded the processes of stabilisation as the beginning of the period which would lead to the gradual reformist transformation of capitalism. In the speeches of Karl Kautsky and Rudolf Hilferding and other social democratic theoreticians in

¹ In Britain, real wages for wage workers in 1924-1929 amounted to between 87 and 92 points (as opposed to the 100 points, represented by the 1920 figure), in France, they amounted to between 107 and 109 points (1914 figure equals 100), in Germany between 74 and 98 points (the figure for 1913/14 represented 100). Living conditions for the working people in the Scandinavian countries had improved, particularly in Sweden, although the rising living standards affected mainly skilled workers (*Real Wages in the Period of the General Crisis of Capitalism*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 48, 163, 246—in Russian).

² Henry Ford, *Today and Tomorrow*, New York, 1926, p. 22.

the period 1924-1927 the idea was expounded to the effect that the growth of the monopolies and state-monopoly trends would restrict competition and put an end to anarchy in production, which would be replaced by "organised capitalism"; the state meanwhile would allegedly turn more and more into a body above classes. Through the extension of the representation of the working class in state organisations and in the economic organisations of the monopolies it would be possible, according to the leaders of the Social Democrats, to achieve a gradual transfer of power by "organised capitalism" to society, which they would have their audiences believe meant a transition to socialism.¹ It was on this "theoretical foundation" that the whole of the social-reformist policy was based. The right-wing Social Democrats succeeded to a greater degree than ever before to persuade the mass reformist organisations to resort to class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The new historical period, according to the bourgeois and right-wing reformist leaders, made revolutionary struggle unnecessary.

In these conditions the Marxist-Leninist analysis of stabilisation processes assumed particular importance: it was only on the basis of that analysis that a correct assessment of the prospects for historical development, of the course of the world revolutionary process could be arrived at and the tasks facing the revolutionary workers' movement be formulated. The Comintern and the communist parties were able in a reliable way to define the main features of capitalist stabilisation. Prominent figures in the communist movement, including Clara Zetkin, Palmiro Togliatti, Georgi Dimitrov, William Gallacher, Otto Kuusinen, Vassil Kolarov, Ernst Thälmann, Eugen Varga, Dmitri Manuilsky, Solomon Lozovsky and Joseph Jacquemotte, with reference to figures on the development of capitalism, the contradictions within it and the rivalry between the two world systems, came forward with tenets that represented a creative addition to the Leninist analysis of the modern historical era. After examining the changes in the socio-economic and political development of capitalism, and subjecting to detailed criticism bourgeois theories of "prosperity" and of the social-reformist theory of "organised capitalism", the Comintern and the communist parties elaborated on the basis of Lenin's writings the scientific conception of the general crisis of capitalism. The elaboration of this theory was an important

¹ *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1925 in Heidelberg. Protokoll mit dem Bericht der Frauenkonferenz*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 7, 283; *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1927 in Kiel. Protokoll mit dem Bericht der Frauenkonferenz*, Berlin, 1927, pp. 166-70; K. Kautsky, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, Vol. II, Berlin, 1927, pp. 469-70, 474-75, 595; R. Hilferding, *Capitalism, Socialism and Social Democracy*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, pp. 106-08 (in Russian).

contribution by Communists to the ideological and theoretical development of the revolutionary labour movement.¹

In their analysis of capitalist stabilisation the Communists stressed that it was taking place within the framework of the general crisis of capitalism and for that reason could only be termed partial and temporary and would inevitably bring in its wake the possibility of new social upheavals and clashes between the imperialist powers.

A crucial factor of the situation was that the world system of capitalism now no longer reigned supreme. The very existence and development of the USSR which had built up a new, higher form of social life was undermining the foundations of the capitalist order. A struggle between two diametrically opposed socio-economic systems was now unfolding on the world arena. This rivalry manifested itself particularly acutely in the political sphere: the class struggle had entered a new stage because in the world arena there had emerged a working class possessed of its own state.² No processes of stabilisation within the capitalist system could wipe out the fact of such great and historic importance as the sundering of the chain of imperialism and the birth of a socialist world.

The cyclical recovery of the capitalist economy, the growth of production and technological progress were accompanied by internal contradictions that grew more serious as a result of the general crisis of capitalism. The creation of new production capacities, the continuing concentration of capital and the consolidation of the monopolies, the accumulation of wealth and the increase in the share of national revenue centred in their possession, the widening scale of exploitation, the trend, towards state-monopoly coalescence, the appearance of international monopolies—all these developments inevitably led to increased reproduction of capitalist contradictions.

The latent exacerbation of these contradictions made itself felt in the proletarianisation of the increasing masses of the population, in the ever more frequent under-use of production capacity, the growing disproportions within the economy, chronic unemployment and the gap between effective demand and the growth of production, etc. Starting out from this analysis, the Comintern, as early as 1928, drew attention to the undermining of capitalist stabilisation and predicted the onset of a profound economic crisis.

The exacerbation of the crisis in the imperialists' colonial system also served to undermine the stabilisation of capitalism. The peoples

¹ B. N. Ponomarev, "The Historical Importance of the Comintern", *The Comintern and Its Revolutionary Traditions. Materials from the Scientific Session Devoted to the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist International*. Moscow, March 25-26, 1969, Moscow, 1969, p. 17 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International as Reflected in Documentary Material, 1919-1923*, Moscow, 1933, p. 13 (in Russian).

of the East stirred to a new awareness by the October Revolution had risen up to join the fight against imperialist domination and directed their onslaught at the fringes of the imperialist system. The very same year when the partial stabilisation was making itself felt throughout the capitalist world, a national liberation revolution broke out in China. This was followed by other outbreaks of the liberation struggle of the masses in a number of oppressed countries. The growing exploitation of the colonies, the punitive measures used by the imperialists against the national liberation movement made the contradictions between the imperialists and the peoples of the oppressed countries more serious and more acute. The 6th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee (February-March 1926) stated that "the growth of the anti-imperialist movement in colonies and semi-colonies"¹ had played an enormous role in undermining capitalist stabilisation.

The temporary, unreliable nature of the stabilisation stemmed from the fact that the development of the capitalist countries proceeded at an uneven rate, in unpredictable leaps and bounds. The shift of the economic centre of the capitalist world to the United States; the fall of Britain's share in world capitalist production, and France's failure to move forward; Germany's new pursuit of imperialist policies despite the Treaty of Versailles; the rapid growth of Japan's economic might; the intensification of the fight for oil and other raw materials, the militarisation of the economy, etc.—all these processes inevitably led to the intensification of the contradictions between the imperialist powers and to the formation of new military blocs.

Capitalist stabilisation could not "do away with" the laws of capitalism which operated objectively and eliminate from social life the class struggle. The actual retreat of the working class in the capitalist countries was of a relative character. The ebbing of the revolutionary tide and the economic boom made possible a temporary disillusionment of the masses in the revolutionary methods of class struggle and the growth of illusions with regard to the potential of reformist policies. All these developments were responsible for a drop in the political and social activity of large sections of the working people as compared with the early years after the First World War. Taken all in all, however, the level of organisation that had in the meantime been attained by the working class was far higher than it had been before the war. The growing influence of workers' parties, and most important of all, the formation of a revolutionary vanguard for the international proletariat, the waxing strength of the trade unions, and the overall rise in the political activity of the

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 614.

masses enabled the working class to wage an energetic struggle in defence of its own social and political interests. Attempts by the bourgeoisie to make up for these deviations from stabilisation at the expense of the working people and the implementation by capitalist employers of various rationalisation processes so as to intensify labour still further were resisted by the working class.

This meant that capitalist stabilisation was not equipped to wrest capitalism from this situation of general crisis. It provided no justification for reformist prophecies to the effect that capitalism was once more firmly established for a whole historical era. In addition, capitalist stabilisation was not merely an objective process but also the focus of class struggle: it was also clearly affected by the strength of the revolutionary labour movement in its protest against bourgeois policies and by the level of single-minded organisation behind that protest.

In the majority of the capitalist countries the political domination of the bourgeoisie was consolidated during those years on the basis of bourgeois-democratic regimes. However, in a number of countries there were fascist or military-authoritarian regimes that had been set up at the beginning of the 1920s (Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain, etc.). Here civic rights were significantly curtailed or done away with altogether. Parliaments were either dissolved or taken over by the fascists, workers' parties and class trade unions were either banned or only allowed to engage in a restricted range of activities, and the Communists were subjected to the harshest harassment of all. An all-embracing reactionary system of propaganda and education was set up, whose distinctive characteristics were anti-communism, rejection of democracy, chauvinism and militarism. Fascist ideology was permeated with social demagoguery. The growing executive power (if not omnipotence) of such regimes resulted in a number of cases in the emergence of personal dictatorships. A major role in the life of state and society under such fascist regimes was played by the fascist party itself, which had at its disposal military formations.¹ Fascist regimes also derived support from the army and the most reactionary circles in the military machine.

During the partial stabilisation of capitalism such fascist or military-authoritarian regimes were set up in Portugal (1926) and also in certain countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, where class contradictions had assumed a particularly acute nature. This showed that fascist movements had not disappeared and had not ceased to be a very real danger at least in certain countries.

In the majority of the capitalist countries fascist movements and

¹ P. Togliatti, *Lectures on Fascism*, New York, 1967, pp. 38-39.

parties during this period were forced to take a back seat.¹ The petty-bourgeois masses whose material position had improved somewhat began to desert fascist units. The bourgeoisie in these states did not regard fascism as its main weapon. The Communists realised that in the conditions which obtained in that period fascism, as Togliatti was to write, did not suit "the purpose of the offensive against the proletariat.... The struggle in those countries is waged at a different level, by 'economic' means rather than any other."² However, in those countries the parties working in the interests of big business did not renounce bourgeois-democratic forms of rule, encouraged the fascist movement and kept it alive to one degree or another as a last resort should the class struggle once more become acute.

Big changes in the methods of struggle used against the working class and its revolutionary parties were observed in the policy of the bourgeoisie in the major capitalist countries during the years of partial stabilisation. All-out violent methods gave way to more sophisticated combinations of draconian measures against the workers at one moment and compromises and subtle measures designed to split the labour movement and win over reformist workers' leaders at another moment. Whereas in the past the bourgeoisie had adopted a negative attitude to the participation of Social Democrats in governments, after the First World War the formation of social democratic governments became a common-place phenomenon in the political life of a number of countries. This bore witness not only to the growing influence of reformist parties over the electorate but also to the curtailment of the social support for bourgeois parties, which were no longer able to administer their nations without cooperating with reformist workers' leaders. The bourgeoisie had to take into account the changed balance of power and to turn to its own ends blocs with the Social Democrats. However, such developments brought the labour movement face to face with serious new dangers.

The broader scope for reformist activity against the new background of class collaboration led to an increase in the opportunist trends in the policies and ideology of the Social Democrats. Collaboration with the social democratic leaders enabled the bourgeoisie to manoeuvre and broaden the social support for its political domination. The majority of the social democratic leaders who supported the main bourgeois evaluations of capitalist stabilisation embarked on the course of adapting their policies in line with capitalist development.

¹ *The History of Fascism in Western Europe*, Moscow, 1978, p. 397 (in Russian).

² P. Togliatti, *Opere*, Vol. II, Rome, 1972, p. 125.

The right wing of the international social democratic movement which came forward with the conception of a gradual swing towards socialism, as a result of Socialists' activities in bourgeois parliaments and bourgeois governments, regarded the participation of Social Democrats in governments as acceptable under virtually any circumstances.

Yet, the results of the work carried out by the Social Democrats within the context of governments were more than modest. After a number of limited acts of social legislation had been adopted that met the most urgent needs of working people, the social-democratic leaders achieved no further success in implementing democratic socio-economic reforms they had announced. The nationalisation of industry or any of its individual branches during the period when Social Democrats were taking part in governments were virtually unheard of. The Social Democrats were unable to any significant degree to lighten the burden of unemployment, let alone resolve the problem. The slogans of the Social Democrats to the effect that progressive taxes on capital would be introduced and "fair" wages guaranteed by the state were nothing but wishful thinking.

The results of government activity of the Social Democrats were so far removed from the promised struggle against capitalist domination that they gave rise to disillusionment in the social democratic movement itself, calling forth criticism against the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie at the governmental level.

In the situation that had now taken shape the labour movement was in desperate need of a policy which would make the working class independent of the bourgeoisie both ideologically and politically, and which would make its struggle for social progress, democracy and peace an effective one.

COMMUNIST POLICY FOR A NEW STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The partial stabilisation of capitalism meant that the era of revolutionary assault had given way to a relatively calm struggle. As was noted in resolutions of the Comintern, a period of "more or less protracted development of the world revolution"¹ had begun. The most urgent tasks were to hold back the offensive of the capitalists, to uphold the immediate economic and political demands of the working people, and to prepare the working class and its organisations for class struggle in every way possible. It was even more important now than before for the Communists to consolidate the com-

¹ *Bolshevising the Communist International. Report of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, March 21 to April 14, 1925, London, w.d., p. 145.*

munist parties, to step up their ideological and political activities and strengthen their organisation; and finally to extend the links between these parties and the masses. The Communists understood that in the situation which had taken shape there could be no question of pursuing a policy of revolutionary assault; yet they were equally convinced that it was wrong to adopt a course of social reformism, which robbed the working class of political independence and held it down with the fetters of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. It was essential to elaborate a militant class policy that would represent a continuation of the resolutions adopted at the 3rd and 4th Comintern Congresses, bearing in mind the new conditions and tasks that lay ahead and also the prospects for bitterer class battles in the future.

The communist movement discussed the tasks facing the labour movement in these new conditions at the *5th Comintern Congress*. It was held in Moscow between June 17 and July 8, 1924. The 504 delegates represented 50 communist and workers' parties and ten international organisations. This was the first congress that had been convened without the founder and leader of the Comintern, without Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. The death of the leader of the international communist movement, the great follower of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, who continued their work and teaching was an irreparable loss for the working class of the whole world, for the whole of progressive mankind. Yet Lenin had bequeathed to the Communists an invincible weapon, ideas which raised Marxist revolutionary theory to a new, higher level corresponding to the needs of a new historical epoch.

The day after the opening of the 5th Comintern Congress the delegates assembled by the Lenin Mausoleum where Kalinin delivered a speech entitled "Leninism and the Comintern". Kalinin stressed the great transforming power of Leninism, "the finest weapon which has been forged by the proletariat in its struggle for liberation".¹ At the 5th Comintern Congress and the 5th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee (March-April 1925) great care was taken to explain that Leninism is Marxism of the new historical epoch, that it is a new stage in the development of Marxism and that "under present conditions there can be no revolutionary Marxism without Leninism".² A powerful rebuff was given to the opportunist attempts to represent Leninism as something separate from Marxism, to depict it as a specifically national theory engendered by Russian conditions. The universal, international character of Leninist theory was stressed; it was represented as something

¹ *The 5th International Comintern Congress. Verbatim Report, Part I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, pp. 33, 40 (in Russian).*

² *Bolshevising the Communist International, p. 150.*

based on the historical experience of the whole worldwide revolutionary movement.¹

The main question discussed at the 5th Comintern Congress and the 5th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee was how best to achieve the ideological, political, and organisational consolidation of communist parties, and how to turn them into truly militant parties of a new type, and finally how to set up a mass proletarian movement inspired by the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The course of previous class battles had shown that communist parties, although they marched in the front line of the fighting proletariat, were not yet sufficiently strong, experienced and battle-tested, and were not yet able to master the whole arsenal of Marxist-Leninist policies. The majority of the communist parties did not yet have mass-scale support. The campaign to consolidate communist parties ideologically, politically and organisationally assumed particular importance also in connection with the fact that during the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, when the pace of revolutionary development was slowed and reformist influence was stronger than usual, it was essential "to create a bulwark against this wavering, to retain the finest elements of the proletarian vanguard in our ranks, increase their number, hold aloft the banner of the proletarian revolution, and in this way be capable in very difficult circumstances to weld together a proletarian nucleus fitted to prepare for, and organise the proletarian revolution under all and any conditions".²

The tasks involved in consolidating the communist parties in these historical conditions were formulated as a policy of "the Bolshevisation of the sections of the Communist International". In the documents issued by the Comintern on this question the essence of Bolshevisation was defined as the appreciation by the sections of the Comintern of everything, "which in Russian Bolshevism was and is international and of general application",³ as due study and application of the "experiences of the Russian Communist Party in the three Russian revolutions, and also, of course, the experiences of every other section which has engaged in serious fighting".⁴ This statement acted as a rebuff against the inventions of the opponents of communism and the opportunists, who alleged that Bolshevisation was aimed only at mastering and understanding the Russian experiment and ignored the importance of lessons to be drawn from the

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 146.

³ *International Press Correspondence*, Special Number, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 652.

⁴ *Bolshevising the Communist International*, p. 148.

struggle in other countries. The mastering of the experience of the Bolsheviks was also intended to be a creative step, not a matter of dogmatic acceptance. It was pointed out that Bolshevisation should "be pursued in exact accordance with the behests of Lenin, attention being paid, however, to the concrete circumstances in each country".¹

This drive to consolidate the ranks of communist party members from the ideological, political, and organisational angle required a dove-tailing of all that was the best in the ideological heritage of the working class with active utilisation and development of the revolutionary traditions of individual peoples. In order to take a conscious part in the struggle it was essential that a French Communist should know the works of Lafargue and the most important aspects of Guesde's writings, that British Communists should have been encouraged to respect the Chartist movement, that German Communists should be familiar with the experience of struggle gained by the German Social Democrats at the time when the anti-socialist law was introduced, and should be able to use the works of Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel and other workers' leaders opposed to opportunism, that Russian Communists should not forget the work of Georgi Plekhanov in the period when he was a Marxist. "To Bolshevise the Party means to enable it consciously to continue all that which was genuinely revolutionary and genuinely Marxian in the First and Second Internationals—on the basis of Leninism."² The slogan "Bolshevisation" thus implied no reducing all tactics to a single uniform model, no rejection by the parties of any face of their own, of their own national revolutionary traditions. Moreover it demanded that these traditions should be creatively assimilated and developed.

Decisive importance was attached to the fact that communist parties should become mass parties. The Comintern rejected the idea that the mass character of these parties would inevitably lead to opportunist deviations. Dangers might well emerge in the course of the work to build up communist parties: "On the one hand, the danger of becoming a small sect of 'pure' Communists with excellent 'principles', incapable of establishing contact with the contemporary mass movements of the workers; on the other hand, there is the danger of falling to the level of an amorphous, semi-Social-Democratic Party, when the Party fails to combine the fight for winning over the masses of the workers, with the maintenance of loyalty to the principles of Communism."³ Pointing out the need to wage a struggle on two fronts—against both right-wing and "left" opportunist-

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Special Number, Vol. 4, No. 52, July 30, 1924, p. 550.

² *Bolshevising the Communist International*, p. 151.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

ism, the Comintern stressed that communist parties would be able to develop and grow stronger on a sound basis if they followed correct policies, carried out correct ideological work and campaigned to achieve higher political awareness.

A crucial precondition for the transformation of communist parties into mass-scale militant bodies was held to be their organisational restructuring on the basis of production cells; territorial (street-based) cells were regarded as supplementary to these. Fundamental conclusions were also made with regard to education and selection of party cadres, the consolidation of the communist party's leading nucleus, methods of work within the party apparatus, and the inter-connection between party discipline and inner-party democracy. It was noted that many inner-party crises in certain parties resulted from the absence of the essential minimum of inner-party democracy, which held down the initiative of the rank and file. A resolution of the 6th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee read as follows: "The system of democratic centralism should function so that not only instructions and leadership come *down from above*, but also that a real free expression of the opinions and will of the entire masses of the members of our Party comes *up from below*. Democratic centralism is not only discipline, but discipline *plus* real election of the leading elements, *plus* free discussion within the Party of all questions (except points of direct activity, when the question has already been decided), *plus* the real individual activity of rank and file Party members."¹

The Comintern regarded Bolshevisation as part and parcel of its practical activity. Attention was drawn to the fact that ideological work and political training of Communists could only be properly carried out if these were inseparably linked with the real day-to-day class struggle and became a part of the latter.

The decisions of the Comintern on the subject of Bolshevisation served to define the maximum, to which it was essential to aspire in the struggle to strengthen the communist parties' organisation, political influence and ideological grounding. By no means everywhere did it prove possible to achieve the set aims, for the world-wide bourgeoisie sought to hold down or seriously restrict the activity of communist parties, and within the labour movement itself the Communists were actively opposed by the social democratic leaders. The communist movement itself had to come to terms with certain internal problems stemming from the appearance of "right" and "left" deviations within it. Despite this the policy of Bolshevisation continued to play a most important role in the development of the

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Special Number, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 623.

communist parties and in enhancing their militancy in the 1930s. The main result of this policy was to be seen in the communist parties' emergent abilities to elaborate reliable political courses on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and creatively to pursue these in the conditions obtained in various countries where these parties were at work.

In the course of Bolshevisation wide-scale work was carried out to train communist-party cadres in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism; the communist parties succeeded in enabling the mass membership to reach an understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory and of principles of revolutionary policy. An important contributory factor to this success was the creation by the Comintern of the systematic training of party cadres. In March 1926, special courses were made available at the Comintern Executive Committee's International Leninist School (ILS) in Moscow, and soon after at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (CUTE). The courses of study at the ILS and the CUTE were arranged in such a way that theoretical principles were expounded on the basis of international experience from many countries, linked with the specific problems affecting students' own countries; these principles were also studied in connection with creative analysis of the experience of the CPSU(B).¹ Educational facilities for party workers were provided by all communist parties.

The Comintern and individual communist parties were now more active on the publishing front. Up until the end of the 1920s publications put out by the Comintern Executive Committee were being published in 40 languages. The works of Marx, Engels and Lenin were widely propagated throughout the world.

This Marxist-Leninist training, which went hand in hand with the practical experience of the class struggle, and the reorganisation of communist parties according to the production principle, which meant that the factory-based organisations of the working class became in fact the main links in communist parties, represented their important advances at this particular time.² The Bolshevisation meant that in the majority of communist parties there emerged a cohesive Marxist-Leninist dominant majority and that Marxist-Leninist principles of leadership took root: respect for the inseparable link between theory and practice, revolutionary ardour, unswerving hostility towards opportunist deviations, tight organisation and the collective spirit. In the ranks of the Comintern "cadres of well-tried leaders of the labour movement of a Leninist type and

¹ G. Z. Sorkin, K. K. Shirinya, "The Comintern—School for the Internationalist Training of Party Cadres", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 1, 1977, pp. 75-76.

² J. Duclos, *Mémoires, 1896-1934. Le chemin que j'ai choisi*, Paris, 1968, p. 257.

outstanding proletarian leaders were trained and steeled in the struggle".¹

Supported by the Comintern Executive Committee, the communist parties put a stop to the schemes of right-wing deviationists who were in practice veering towards a social democratic assessment of capitalist stabilisation and towards reformist policies in general. The Communists of Norway, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the United States, Japan, and a number of other countries had to wage a hard struggle against powerful right-opportunist groups within their ranks. In a number of other parties there was a serious threat from "left" and "ultra-left" deviationists who were attempting to foist upon their parties adventurist policies, while disregarding completely the conditions that prevailed during this period of partial stabilisation. Groups of this type were routed in the communist parties of Germany, Italy, France, Holland, the United States, Japan, and other countries. Trotskyite groups were excluded from communist parties as well.

This struggle to consolidate parties of a new type made it easier, as Togliatti was later to comment, "to further the formation of the Communist Parties and the moulding of their leading cadres, to remove from these parties the individuals and groups who eschewed serious assimilation of Marxist-Leninist principles, refused to submit to discipline or adopt the methods of work typical of a revolutionary party".²

In the complex conditions of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, when reformist influence was asserting itself more strongly on the mass labour movement, the communist parties, thanks to the policy of Bolshevisation, not only were able to keep the vanguard of the working class loyal to revolutionary principles, but also to achieve the ideological and political consolidation of that vanguard.

As for the organisational development of the international communist movement, it was a more difficult undertaking. Unreliable and unstable elements had been excluded from the ranks of the communist parties. Groups of some considerable size had split away from certain communist parties, being unable to turn their back on reformist principles. The struggle against opportunist deviationists, which became a very grim one at that time, led not only to the opportunists being excluded from the parties or splitting away from them but sometimes it meant the loss of misled sections of the membership. At the same time, however, the communist movement continued to spread to new countries and regions. At the 6th Comintern Congress (1928) the communist parties of Cuba, Korea, New Zealand,

¹ B. N. Ponomarev, "The 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the Comintern", *The Revolutionary Heritage of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1980, p. 6.

² *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 2, No. 11, November 1959, p. 47.

Paraguay, the Irish Workers' League, the Socialist Party of Ecuador, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Colombia were admitted as new sections to the Comintern. Although the number of Communists in the capitalist world sank by almost 50 per cent during the period 1924-1928, the Comintern sections in the capitalist countries still numbered 445,000 and embraced the most committed contingent of the working class, which had firmly embraced Marxist-Leninist principles.

All in all, the policy of Bolshevisation represented an enrichment and further elaboration of Lenin's teaching on the subject of a party of a new type, and on the role of the subjective factor in the revolutionary struggle of the working class.

One of the most important tasks for the Comintern and communist parties in connection with the partial stabilisation of capitalism was the definition of the course along which the world revolutionary process would develop in the new historical conditions, and of the changes that would take place in the ties that existed between the main forces involved in this process. The whole strategy and all the tactics of the international revolutionary labour and communist movements depended upon the correct resolution of this central question.

The question was further complicated by the fact that in 1926 the Trotskyite-Zinovievite opposition came to the fore, demanding that the main policy of the CPSU(B) be reviewed, and trying to foist upon the Comintern its own view of the prospects for the advance of world revolution.

This opposition started out from Trotsky's notorious policy of "permanent revolution", according to which only the victory of revolution world-wide could save the Land of the Soviets from the restoration of capitalist relations, only the encouragement of world revolution come what may, even if it meant unleashing war, could ensure the success of world socialism. The members of this opposition maintained that to build socialism in the USSR signified a renunciation of the very prospect of world revolution, since the task of building socialism in the USSR allegedly went against the interests of the world revolutionary process. They sought to frighten Communists by emphasising the danger inherent in the USSR's growing dependence on the world capitalist economy, maintaining that within the framework of the USSR it would not be possible to resolve the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry. The opposition members regarded the foreign policy of the Soviet state aimed at combatting war and upholding peace as a deviation from a truly revolutionary line.¹ Trotskyite group tried to unleash a fac-

¹ *Outline History of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 244-45; *The Main Stages in the Development of the World Revolutionary Process after October 1917*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 150-51 (in Russian).

tional struggle within the communist parties. The defeatist course advocating the need to abandon socialist construction in the USSR and replacing it by an adventurist policy designed to push world revolution, while disregarding the objective conditions of the moment, was the course of action recommended by the Trotskyite-Zinovievite opposition. Its programme disguised by leftist slogans could only have led to the most shattering defeat for Communists and the whole of the international labour movement, and to the loss of the major victories already attained.

As early as the 3rd and 4th Comintern Congresses the conclusion had been drawn after discussion of the interaction between Soviet Russia and other detachments of the world revolutionary movement that the Soviet Union was the main front of the world socialist revolution, that it should begin and develop the building of socialism, counting on the fact that a few years later the revolutionary action of the proletariat in the advanced countries would result in new breaks in the imperialist chain. In his last works Lenin stressed that all the conditions necessary for the building of socialism and the victorious completion of it were to be found in the Soviet Union. Yet the question as to the victory of socialism in the USSR at a time of capitalist encirclement had not been the subject of wide-spread discussion. Now, however, it was vital to resolve this question: could socialist construction in the USSR be successfully completed despite continued capitalist encirclement, and what role would the building of socialism in the USSR play during this period of history, what aims should other forces within the world revolutionary process set themselves? It was essential to achieve a clear view of the path which the world revolution should follow in the circumstances that had developed by this particular point in time.

In the struggle against the Trotskyite bloc, in which the CPSU(B) played the leading role, the communist movement upheld the Marxist-Leninist teaching with regard to world revolution and the role of real socialism. The 7th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee (1926) at which Stalin delivered a major speech, dealt a crushing blow to Trotskyism as a political current that was undeniably playing into the hands of the international bourgeoisie. With reference to the decisions reached at the 15th All-Union Party Conference, the Plenary Meeting substantiated most thoroughly Lenin's tenet to the effect that "the U.S.S.R. possesses in the country 'all that is necessary and sufficient' for the complete construction of Socialist society".¹

Powerful and detailed arguments to support this idea were expres-

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Special Number, Vol. 7, No. 11, February 3, 1927, p. 238.

sed in the speeches made at the Plenary Meeting by prominent figures in the communist movement—these included Clara Zetkin, Bohumir Smeral, Vassil Kolarov, Ernst Thälmann, Palmiro Togliatti, Sen Katayama, Tom Bell, Philipp Dengel, and Dmitri Manuilsky. The international forum of Communists wholeheartedly supported the policy of the CPSU(B) to build socialism within the USSR.

At the same time the Comintern elaborated the main aspects of the influence which Soviet Russia had exerted on the world revolutionary process. It was stressed that the strengthening of the Land of the Soviets in every possible way ensured the “continuation, intensification and expansion of the *International Socialist Revolution*”,¹ that objectively the USSR was the main centre of international revolution and that its successes in building socialism had an enormous revolutionising impact as an example to be emulated, leading to a shift in the real balance of forces in the world, to a weakening of world capitalism.

The existence and consolidation of the Soviet Union helped the labour movement in the capitalist countries to defend and consolidate a number of social gains obtained during the period of the post-war revolutionary upsurge. The influence of the Land of the Soviets made itself felt in international relations as well, in the strengthening of the forces upholding peace. The advance of Soviet Russia along the path of socialist construction and economic progress was opening up more and more opportunities for this new country to help and support the revolutionary liberation struggle world-wide. Last but not least, the initial experience of socialist construction was of inestimable importance for the revolutionary labour movement: it provided a basis for more profound analysis of the real implications of the transition to socialism and the elaboration of an integrated conception of that transition and the tasks it involves, so that practical methods for the achievement of numerous specific political and socio-economic objectives of socialist construction might be defined.

The ideological rout of the Trotskyites with their anti-Leninist views, the further elaboration of Marxist-Leninist principles concerning the paths of world revolution and the construction of socialism in the USSR constituted one of the major landmarks in the struggle to pursue a correct strategy for the communist movement in that period. That was an essential prerequisite for the further ideological and political strengthening of the communist parties.

The conclusions reached by the communist movement with regard to the problems affecting the advance of world revolution were

¹ *Programme of the Communist International Together with the Statutes of the Communist International*, New York, 1929, p. 59.

summarised in the Programme of the Communist International adopted by the 6th Comintern Congress.

The Congress was in session in Moscow from July 17 to September 1, 1928. At this congress 57 parties and nine international organisations were represented by a total of 532 delegates. All questions central to the communist movement at that time were discussed, including the situation of the USSR, methods of struggle to ward off the danger of imperialist wars, and the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies.¹ The main item on the Congress agenda was the Programme of the Communist International. For the first time the Comintern was to adopt a document drawing on the historical experience of the whole international revolutionary labour movement and charting the prospects for its subsequent development.

The Comintern Programme started out from the premise that "the international proletarian revolution represents a combination of processes which vary in time and character: purely proletarian revolutions; revolutions of a bourgeois-democratic type which grow into proletarian revolutions; war for national liberation; colonial revolutions".²

Bearing in mind the diversity of the specific conditions obtaining in the countries concerned, the Programme formulated a tenet about three types of countries and the appropriate paths required for the transition to proletarian power. The first group included the advanced capitalist countries with well-established productive forces and a high level of centralisation of production, where small-scale production played a relatively insignificant role and where bourgeois-democratic systems had long since been established. The second group included countries with a medium level of capitalist development (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, the Balkan countries, etc.) where conspicuous traces of semi-feudal relations were still to be found in agriculture, where there were to be found a certain minimum of the material prerequisites for socialist construction, and where bourgeois-democratic reforms were by no means complete. The third group included colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries, where the rudiments of industry, and on occasions fairly well-developed industries, were to be found, however still of proportions insufficient to make independent socialist construction possible, countries where feudal or medieval relations were the order of the day and indeed where in the most backward instances vestiges of primitive tribal relations were still to be encountered.³

In accordance with this classification, an appropriate strategy

¹ For details of Comintern policy with regard to the national liberation movement, see Chapter 7 of this volume.

² *Programme of the Communist International...*, p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

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for the revolutionary labour movement in each group was elaborated. In the developed capitalist countries, the main recommendation put forward in the Comintern Programme was for the immediate implementation of socialist revolution. For countries characterised by a medium level of capitalist development the aim was defined either as a proletarian revolution with a large volume of bourgeois democratic reforms or as a relatively rapid development of a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution. For the colonies and dependent countries the path to victory for the proletariat was only viewed as possible via a number of preparatory stages, over a whole period during which the bourgeois-democratic revolution would be evolving into a socialist revolution.¹

These conclusions possessed most important ideological and political significance. They spotlighted the way in which strategic and tactical principles depended upon the type of socio-economic and political relations dominant in the country under consideration, upon the tasks of the working class and other working people and all the oppressed that stemmed objectively from these relations. The world-wide historical prospects for development were closely linked up to the tasks facing the proletariat, the all-important class of the new historical era, in its class struggle, in the course of its advance to socialism. The programme was inspired by a militant revolutionary spirit and it encouraged the communist parties to activise the revolutionary struggle waged by the working class and its allies.

Yet at the same time there were several important questions which still had to be solved. These were connected in particular with the political slogans and exhortations to be used during the transition period, in particular the demand for setting up a workers' and peasants' government. At the 5th Comintern Congress it was decided that the interpretation of a government of workers and peasants as tantamount to the dictatorship of the proletariat be adopted, which meant that the former term could no longer be used as an interim slogan. Nevertheless in their direct experience of revolutionary struggle communist parties came up against the need to elaborate transitional slogans: questions connected with the search for transitional forms of government on the path to proletarian power were discussed by the communist parties of Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Lithuania, and other countries.

By the end of the 1920s, however, the searches by the communist movement for transitional political stages on the path to working-class power in the advanced capitalist countries receded into the distance and instead the point at issue became the general formula-

¹ *Programme of the Communist International*, pp. 54-56.

tion of the final goal of the communist movement. In the Programme of the Communist International the strategic principles for the first type of countries were linked too closely and directly with socio-economic factors, while political factors were not taken into account to a sufficient degree. This gave rise to a certain inflexibility and over-simplifications. The slogan calling for a workers' and peasants' government devised with Lenin's active involvement as a slogan for the transition to proletarian power was not regarded as applicable in the context of the advanced capitalist countries. The programme also failed to take due account of opportunities for coming forward with transitional demands when a revolutionary situation no longer existed, or had not yet come into being.¹

Yet it was precisely in the struggle for transitional demands, as actual developments were to show, that political experience was gleaned which might enable the masses to march forward to new frontiers, enable the working class to assume political power. The reluctance to put forward transitional slogans made it difficult to translate the Communists' revolutionary principles into the language of revolutionary practice. These difficulties, in their turn, provided rich soil for "left" sectarianism.

Elements of over-simplification and "left" extremism in strategic principles, a narrow understanding of approaches to socialist revolution were to be found side by side at that time with an incomplete understanding of the significance of general democratic demands. The revolutionary labour movement vigorously fought against the threat of war, against reactionary steps by bourgeois governments and in support of efforts to extend the voting rights to the working people, etc. Yet these tasks were, as a rule, only raised in direct connection with the propaganda of the need for socialist revolution.

The 6th Comintern Congress, in its description of the general crisis affecting capitalism and of the proper paths for the struggle at that time, provided an analysis of fascism and the dangers inherent in it. Communists always made it clear that the threat of fascism was latent in the trend intrinsic to imperialism towards ever greater reaction, and also that the danger of fascism kept growing as the class struggle became more acute. The communist parties exposed the activities of fascist organisations in Germany, Austria, France, the United States and various other countries, demanding that fascist gangs be disarmed and banned and that fascist terrorists be brought to justice.

The discussions about fascism which unfolded in the communist parties of Italy, Poland and in the leading bodies of the Comintern in the period 1926-1928 helped to put an end to certain erroneous

¹ *Programme of the Communist International...*, p. 54.

ideas, in particular the exaggeration of the degree of independence enjoyed by the petty bourgeoisie in the fascist movement. Communists paid ever closer attention to the specific traits of fascism in different countries and criticised the social democratic conception of the absence of any fascist threat in those countries where the petty bourgeoisie was of negligible importance.

The 6th Congress, when summing up its discussion about fascism, noted in the Comintern Programme that the advance of bourgeois-imperialist reaction assumed the form of fascism in specific historical conditions. These were listed as follows: "Instability of capitalist relationships; the existence of a considerable declassed social element, the pauperization of broad strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and of the intelligentsia; discontent among the rural petty bourgeoisie and, finally, the constant menace of mass proletarian action. In order to stabilize and perpetuate its rule, the bourgeoisie is compelled to an increasing degree to abandon the parliamentary system in favor of the fascist system, which is independent of inter-party arrangements and combinations."¹

The Congress drew attention to the efforts of the fascists to build up a basis of mass support, to rely on the petty bourgeoisie in the towns and the peasantry, although these groups did not play an independent role in the fascist movement and were a tool in the hands of the bourgeois reactionaries. At the same time it was noted at the Congress that not every reactionary political trend should be treated as fascism.

While pointing out the inconsistency of bourgeois and social-reformist conceptions of the non-capitalist nature of fascism, the Communists at the same time refuted the view of fascism as a historically inevitable stage in the political development of capitalist society. In documents issued by the 6th Congress it was pointed out that fascism had been brought into being by the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism but that it should not be regarded as a political superstructure, always corresponding to monopoly capitalism. This would have meant tracing back fascism as something that stemmed automatically from the economic conditions inherent in imperialism, divorcing the problem from socio-political factors and the struggle within society.²

In this way the Comintern warned both against attaching too little importance to the fascist threat and against passivity stemming from false views of the inevitable onset of fascism. In this particular approach to the problem, the decisive role in warding off

¹ *Programme of the Communist International...*, p. 22.

² *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 66, September 25, 1928, p. 1187.

the threat of fascism was attributed to the struggle of the working class and its allies.

The views of Communists on the way in which the struggle for peace should be conducted were aimed at enhancing the political activity of the workers and democratic masses. Communists called upon the masses not to trust the social democratic leaders, not to regard bourgeois-democratic governments as firm guarantors of peace, and at the same time actively to engage themselves in the struggle against the threat of war. The Communists explained that the contradictions among the imperialist powers and their anti-Soviet ambitions created a constant threat of war. The 6th Comintern Congress elaborated, in keeping with the needs of the period, a detailed political programme on the issues of peace and war. This provided answers to questions concerning the causes of war, defined various types of war and the proletariat's attitude to the latter, and analysed the then current world situation. It was stressed that "...the main front in the policy of all imperialist powers is directed more and more openly against the Soviet Union and the Chinese revolution". At the same time it was stressed that "a clash between the imperialist groups of powers is possible in the struggle for world supremacy..."¹ A whole range of measures had been drawn up that the communist parties should adopt both in peace-time and when an imperialist war might break out, particularly if this were to be a war against the USSR. Work in the bourgeois army was to be aimed at turning armed workers against their bourgeoisie that unleashed a criminal war. The Communists, therefore, regarded as an urgent task "the establishment and expansion of a revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry and the oppressed nations against capitalism and against the imperialist war danger".²

While directing the energies of the masses towards engaging in an active struggle for peace, the anti-war Comintern Programme, however, too directly linked the struggle against war and that for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of proletarian power, which meant that the anti-war movement was confined only to the forces who had been supporting the Communists or who had been sympathetic towards them. The setting up of a joint anti-war front was also rendered more difficult by the fact that the Communists were intensifying their attacks against social democratic and pacifist leaders at that time, partly in view of the anti-Soviet and anti-communist stand adopted by many of the social democratic and bourgeois leaders of these movements. The overall

¹ *The Struggle against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists. Resolution of the 6th World Congress of the Communist International*, New York, 1932, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

communist strategy for the struggle against fascism and war and the policy of the Communists to develop a mass-scale anti-fascist and anti-war campaign were highly significant in terms of fostering within the working class of a sense of responsibility for the destiny of the world, which in the years that followed enabled the working class to lead the world-wide struggle against fascism and war.

The relative lull in the revolutionary struggle demanded that the communist parties should concentrate their attention on defending the partial demands of the working class and other working people. The most important of these were those for the improvement of workers' real wages, a shorter working week, the introduction or enhancement of national insurance for the unemployed, the shifting of the tax burden to the propertied classes, the improvement of material conditions for the working peasantry, white-collar workers and the impoverished sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the defence of union rights, the struggle in a number of countries against monarchist or fascist regimes. These slogans put forward by the Communists coincided to a large extent with those made by the Social Democrats (albeit more moderate in tone), although this similarity masked differences in the nature of their ultimate political goals.

These differences are totally distorted by bourgeois and social-reformist historians. In particular, they would have us believe that while the Social Democrats were staunch upholders of democracy, the Communists viewed it in a negative light.¹

While the reformists advocated concessions within the framework of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the communist parties, on the other hand, called for a militant policy aimed at meeting the immediate demands of the working people. Great efforts were made to prepare the working class for the struggle ahead, and to free reformist workers from the fetters of class collaboration—a course of action which served best of all the democratic aspirations of the working people. This aspect of communist party policy came

¹ This line is often adopted even by those historians who to a greater or lesser degree are classed as objectivists: E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, Vols. 1-3, London, 1951-1953; K. McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution 1928-1943. The Shaping of Doctrines*, London-New York, 1964; C. Landauer, *European Socialism. A History of Ideas and Movements*, Vols. 1-2, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959. This viewpoint was also typical of the collection of articles: *The Communist International. Historical Highlights*, New York-Stanford, 1969, and for the books of Branko Lazitch and Milorad Drachkowitz, and also for Hugh Seton-Watson (H. Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Khrushchev. The History of World Communism*, New York, 1961).

The most concerted efforts to substantiate the thesis to the effect that Social Democrats were democratic and Communists undemocratic, were made by social-reformist authors starting with Karl Kautsky, Rudolf Hilferding, Friedrich Adler, Emile Vandervelde, etc., and ending with social democratic historians such as Julius Braunthal, Theo Pirker and George Lichtheim.

clearly to the fore in the major strike battles of the time and also in the struggle against the social consequences of capitalist rationalisation.

In the labour movement at that time heated discussions were going on on the subject of capitalist rationalisation. Right reformist leaders supported capitalist rationalisation, maintaining, as they did so, that the progress of capitalist production was to the advantage of the working class. They closed their eyes to the social consequences of capitalist rationalisation, such as more intensive exploitation of the work-force, i.e., consumption of the lives of the workers, the reduction in the number of available jobs and dismissals.

The Communist International and the communist parties discussed the matter of the fight against capitalist rationalisation on numerous occasions. It was the focus of a good deal of attention at the 7th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee. At that plenary meeting it was noted that there were two sides to this rationalisation: the social aspect and that concerning organisational and technical matters. The Communists had, of course, never been against technological progress and improved organisation of labour. Otto Kuusinen stated that the fight was necessary "not against every rationalisation of production, but against such rationalisation of production which worsens the position of the workers".¹ Representatives from a number of communist parties proposed that this problem should be considered in the overall context of the partial demands of the working class: they should put forward the slogan—"Rationalisation at the Expense of the Bourgeoisie!" Proposals were also made to the effect that this slogan should be linked directly to the idea of socialist revolution.² This would have meant that particular attention needed to be paid to the period of the revolution, while insufficient attention be devoted to the practical tasks of the struggle against capitalist rationalisation. The plenary meeting of the Comintern Executive recommended a number of concrete steps that should be taken by the communist parties, but at the same time came forward with a broader slogan—"Socialist, not Capitalist Rationalisation!"³

The Communists also came forward at that time with the slogan calling for workers' control. The 6th and 7th plenary meetings of the Comintern Executive pointed to the need to extend the rights of the factory committees and trade unions so that they might even exercise control over production and distribution, to oppose the

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 88, December 20, 1926, p. 1514.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 1526-27, 1539-40, 1540-42.

³ *The Communist International. 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. II, (1923-1928), London, 1960, p. 324.

closure of factories and to campaign for the nationalisation of banks and key branches of industry under the control of industrial and white-collar workers. The communist parties propagated this slogan calling for workers' control. More complex was the question as to when and in what conditions steps should be taken to put this slogan into practice. Certain steps were taken in this direction mainly in the context of tense strike confrontation. In the communist movement there were fears lest during a period of capitalist stabilisation workers' control might degenerate into collaboration between workers and employers. The possibility of establishing workers' control was for this reason only brought up in connection with situations where the struggle for power was only just round the corner or had actually begun.

The most important method for mobilising the working class to oppose capitalist exploitation and reaction in the sphere of politics was the policy of the united workers' front. However, the conditions in which this policy might be pursued had changed substantially in the majority of the capitalist countries. Since the parties and forces which had moved to the forefront of the political arena at that period were those which had been relying on agreements reached with the Social Democrats or petty-bourgeois parties, the most reactionary group of the bourgeoisie, directly threatening the gains of the working class, had for a time stepped back out of the limelight. The social democratic leaders were trying to persuade the working people that this enemy was already leaving the political stage. They would make out that there was now no enemy whose overthrow the united front demanded, and that the way ahead lay through improvements, gradual reform of "organised capitalism", political alliances of the Social Democrats with bourgeois parties.

The Social Democrats categorically refused to join a united front with the Communists. In this way the actual conditions obtaining in the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism and also the social democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie created major obstacles on the path to a united front.

In this situation the communist policy of a united front had to go hand in hand with criticism of the social democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Obviously though this meant that it was difficult to avoid an intensification of the struggle by the Communists against the Social Democrats. To this was added the fact that in the Comintern and in a number of communist parties, as a result of the defeats of revolutionary actions in the autumn of 1923 in Germany, Bulgaria and Poland, the idea soon spread to the effect that there were now fewer and fewer elements within the social democratic movement capable of adopting the policy of setting up a united front. As a result of the factors outlined above

the policy of a united front was now more narrowly defined than had previously been the case.

The 5th Comintern Congress stressed the need for Communists to engage in the constant and painstaking work of achieving united effort from the workers from below, without excluding the possibility of negotiating with social democratic leaders at the same time: "Unity from below in the rank and file and at the same time negotiations with the leaders—this is the method that will have to be applied very often in those countries where the Social-Democrats are still strong."¹

So as to facilitate this task the Congress made it clear that "the old slogans of the Comintern—Capture and not Destruction of Trade Unions, Opposition to Desertion of Trade Unions, Efforts to bring back into the Unions those who left them, Fight for Unity—are still in force and must be put into practice with the utmost determination and energy."² The Congress called upon Communists everywhere to work within reformist unions despite opposition from right-reformist bureaucrats and suggested a whole list of urgent tasks aimed at strengthening workers' unity.³ The unions were seen by the Communists as their main base for the struggle to set up a united workers' front.

Yet under pressure from "left" extremists some of the theses issued by the Congress were formulated in such a way as to restrict the use of such tactics and to exaggerate the danger of its degeneration into mere opportunism and to regard them mainly as a manoeuvre aimed against the social democratic leaders. "The Social Democrats from the right wing of the labour movement were in a process of transition and more and more becoming converted into the left-wing of the bourgeoisie, and in places, into a wing of fascism."⁴

The practical experience gleaned by those engaged in the class struggle demonstrated that this approach narrowed down the chances of joint action. For this reason the 6th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive saw once again a heated discussion of the tactics required for a united front. Many of those attending the Plenary Meeting criticised the way in which these tactics had been reduced to little more than an exposure of the Social Democrats. The position of the ultra-leftists in Germany (the Fischer-Maslow group) was condemned, for the latter held that a united front was only a tool to be used for exacerbating relations between Communists and Social Democrats. Reluctance to engage in joint action with the

¹ *The Communist International*, No. 7, Leningrad, December 1924-January 1925, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Social Democrats was also held up for criticism. Clara Zetkin came out with a consistently argued attack against the left extremist distortions of the united-front policy. She objected to the use of the term "social-fascism", which in her opinion gave rise to totally unnecessary differences of opinion and clashes that only served to undermine the cause of the united front.¹

The Plenary Meeting recommended that the communist parties should seek to obtain agreements with social democratic workers and always "display a careful, comradely and correct attitude" towards them. It was also proposed that only those slogans should be advocated to arouse the masses as would be acceptable to workers of all political trends and also that there should be put forward "partial demands, capable of attracting semi-proletarian and bourgeois classes".²

The communist parties were obliged sincerely to support all honest endeavours made by social democratic workers in the cause of unity. It was clearly stated in the Comintern Executive resolutions that the Comintern "will conduct the United Front tactics with greater energy than ever before, i.e., it will propose to the Social Democratic workers (and non-Party workers) a joint struggle, joint activities against the bourgeoisie on all the most important problems of politics and economics, upon which accord can be reached between Social Democratic workers and Communists".³

Yet the further the social democratic parties descended down the path of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the more difficult it became to organise united action by the working class. The Social Democrats, who had drawn into the orbit of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie millions of rank-and-file workers and who were moving steadily further to the right, undermined the real opportunities for joint action on the basis of class struggle. The anti-communist stance of right-wing Social Democrats deepened the political split in the ranks of the working class and made relations between communist and social democratic parties worse than ever. In Germany, for instance, social democratic leaders even went so far as to use bourgeois organs of repression to harass the Communists.

It was against this background that extreme-left views began to take root in the communist movement. From 1927 onwards tactics were advocated within the Comintern that were later to be referred to as "class vs. class" tactics.

At the 9th Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive (February

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 20, March 17, 1926, pp. 321-22.

² *International Press Correspondence*, Special Number, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, pp. 619, 622, 627-28.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

1928) these tactics were expounded in resolutions on questions concerning Britain and France. The need was stressed for a major intensification of the struggle against the social democracy as "an agent of imperialism and a bastion of reaction" and also against its left wing which was seen as an obstacle preventing social democratic workers from coming over to the side of the communist party.¹

It was also recommended that greater opposition should be put up to reformist politicians in election campaigns. While in 1925-1926 the communist parties in certain countries had been putting forward joint candidates to represent Communists and Social Democrats to oppose the candidates of the reactionary bourgeois parties, this approach was now viewed as untenable. It was also decided that: "every strike must be the arena of struggle for leadership between Communists and reformists".² All possible avenues of approach to the social democratic parties with suggestions of joint action came to be rejected. The united front was now understood as the involvement of social democratic workers in the struggle to achieve goals formulated by the Communists while opposing the leadership of reformist organisations. There is no doubt that this was an extremely narrow interpretation of the united front policy.

These tactical principles were reaffirmed and specified in stronger terms at the 6th Comintern Congress. The upper strata of the Social Democrats were accused of consistently expressing the interests of the bourgeoisie and the left-wing social democratic leaders were labelled as the most dangerous enemies of communism, through whom bourgeois politics might penetrate into the working class.³

The "class vs. class" policy when originally elaborated did not imply rejection of the idea of a united front. On the contrary, the new policy was devised as a means for dissuading workers who supported the Social Democrats from engaging in class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, which would have meant the consolidation of joint action on the part of the working class as a whole against the front of the bourgeoisie, and which would have raised the fighting efficiency of the proletariat and the level of its class consciousness. At the same time it was borne in mind that certain sections of the reformist workers had their eyes opened thanks to the fact that the bourgeoisie, after using the Social Democrats so as to stabilise capitalism and foist their policy of "partnership" on the workers, destroyed in a number of countries social democratic governments

¹ *Classe contre classe. La question française au IX^e Exécutif et au VI^e Congrès de l'I.C.*, Paris, 1929, p. 100.

² *The Communist International, 1919-1943. Documents*, p. 433.

³ *Communism and the International Situation. Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International. Adopted at the 6th World Congress of the Communist International, 1928*, London, 1929, pp. 18-19.

or ousted Social Democrats from what had recently been coalition governments. Yet the communist parties were basing their plans on the assumption that the reformist organisations had already gone over completely to the side of the bourgeoisie. Distinctions were not being drawn between the right-wing leaders and the rank-and-file Social Democrats. The sectarianism which manifested itself in the adoption of the "class vs. class" slogan made relations with the membership of social democratic organisations still more strained. All this gave rise to certain difficulties in the drive to establish cooperation between the working class and all the intermediate groups within the population, which were without question the allies of the working class in the struggle against the power of monopoly capital.¹

By the end of the 1920s it was widely held in the communist movement that the main blow from the communist parties should, at all stages of the revolution, be directed against intermediate forces and parties that were prepared to compromise their principles. These views that reflected a failure to attach due importance to the role of general democratic objectives in the struggle of the working class and its allies, were not compatible with Lenin's idea to the effect that two tasks needed to be carried out in revolution together: to crush the resistance of the main enemy and to paralyse the instability on the part of the intermediate forces.² In a number of communist parties, sectarian groups, while allegedly breaking away from the Social Democrats, demanded that these parties abandon the drive to defend the most urgent needs of the working people. "The fight for meat is over!" they declared and proclaimed almost every strike to be the herald of the final battle.³

Sectarianism dealt a big blow to the campaign to set up a united workers' front. Yet there is no substance at all in the attempts made by bourgeois, reformist and revisionist writers to exploit the self-critical analysis by Communists of the above-mentioned errors so as to place at their door the responsibility for the continuing split and the drop in the militancy of the labour movement at the time.⁴ It was on the contrary that the Comintern actively propagated the idea to the effect that it was crucially important to achieve workers' unity and that practical paths to this end should be sought. With this aim in mind, the communist parties managed on frequent occasions to overcome sectarian guidelines, bringing about unity between

¹ *Outline History of the Communist International*, pp. 269-70.

² V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1977, p. 100.

³ M. Thorez, *Fils du peuple*, Paris, 1954, p. 70.

⁴ J. Braunthal, *History of the International*, Vol. II, 1914-1943, New York, 1967, pp. 229, 389-90.

the workers and the democratic masses in the drive to achieve specific social and democratic aims. The leadership of the Labour and Socialist International, on the other hand, interpreted the actual stabilisation of capitalism as an argument in favour of stepping up the struggle against the communist movement and deepening the split.

The communist movement at the difficult period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism was the only political force, which was charting for the working class a path of independent policies, essential to the defence of the proletariat's class interests and also to social progress. In the major class conflicts of that period the communist parties emerged as resolute opponents of capitalist policies and strove to play a vanguard role.

Despite the fact that certain problems of communist policy were not solved with enough consistency, the Communists succeeded in charting and firmly upholding a path of committed proletarian policy. They continued to glean experience of struggle and trained men and women for the class battles to come both within their own ranks and also within the advanced section of the working class.

THE CLASS BATTLES OF THE WEST-EUROPEAN PROLETARIAT

In *Britain*, as distinct from some other capitalist countries, the industrial recovery in the years of the partial stabilisation of capitalism was insignificant. By 1929 industrial production had hardly reached the 1913 level. There were over one million unemployed.

The two-party system was beset by even more serious crises than before, which led to the further weakening of the position enjoyed by the Liberal Party and to the emergence of the Labour Party in the role of the second, most important party in the government after the Conservatives. This change had resulted from the fact that the British working class had been playing an increasingly active part in political life influenced as it now was by the class battles inspired by the revolutionary triumph of October 1917. Yet at the same time the ruling circles were trying in their policy of social manoeuvring to use the Labour Party by giving its reformist leaders access to the levers of governmental power.

The political line of the party had been laid down in its policy document entitled "Labour and the Nation" that had been adopted in 1927. This programme called upon Labour supporters to campaign for "the deliberate establishment, by experimental methods, without violence or disturbance, with the fullest utilisation of scientific knowledge and administrative skill, of a social order in which the resources of the community shall be organised and administered

with a single eye to securing for all its members the largest possible measure of economic welfare and personal freedom".¹

The left sections of the party rallied in the main around the Independent Labour Party (ILP) which enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy within the Labour Party. In 1926, the ILP Conference gave its seal of approval to the document "Socialism for To-day" in which demands were made to the effect that a legally guaranteed minimum wage should be introduced and that the government should provide allowances for large families. Recommendations were also made for the nationalisation of the banks, the coal industry, electric power stations, the transport system and land, and also for a planned economy.² The ILP saw the path to the implementation of this programme to lie not through mass struggle but mainly through a Labour government. In other words, the ILP did not aim to do any more than pursue a slightly more radical version of official Labour Party goals.

The British proletariat had built up powerful trade unions. In the mid-1920s the British Trade Union Congress (TUC) numbered close on five million members. Yet the majority in the TUC leadership was reformist. The instinctive preference of the working people for direct action in defence of their interests was blatantly at odds with the policy of growing hostility to mass action found among the right-wing leaders of the British TUC.

The Communists were in fact the true defenders of the interests of the working people. They went out of their way to further the strike action of the proletariat, were actively involved in its organisation and exposed the policy of the Labour Party that was against rather than in support of the workers. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) worked hard and energetically to consolidate the party's rank and file. In 1925, the CPGB already had 5,000 members. Work was initiated to reorganise the party in accordance with the production principle. Close on a hundred CPGB cells were at work in the country's mills and factories.

The Communists also carried out a great deal of work within the left trade unions which formed the so-called Minority Movement. In August 1924, a Minority Movement conference (at which over 250,000 workers were represented) adopted a resolution calling for a revitalisation of the campaign by the trade unions to uphold the economic and social rights of the working people, to raise wages, to introduce a 44-hour working week and to set up militant factory com-

¹ *The Labour Party. Labour and the Nation*, London, 1927, p. 6.

² H. N. Brailsford, J. A. Hobson et al., *The Living Wage. A Report Submitted to the National Administrative Council of the ILP*, London, 1926, p. 37, etc.

mittees.¹ The Minority Movement announced that it was joining the Profintern and declare that its main aim was to abolish capitalism.² Tom Mann was elected as Chairman of this movement, while Harry Pollitt, one of the leaders of the CPGB, was elected secretary. The Minority Movement made an important contribution to the organisation of the strike movement.

Yet the adherents of these left trends did not succeed in undermining the dominant position of the right-wing opportunists in the workers' movement. This meant that the British bourgeoisie had wide scope for manoeuvre. At the parliamentary elections in December 1923 the Conservatives won 259 seats in the House of Commons, the Liberals 155 and the Labour Party 191. The leader of the Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald was invited to form a government and on January 23, 1924 the first Labour government was formed.

Counting on the Labour leaders' urge to retain power, the bourgeoisie hoped to force them to reduce their programme of reforms to a minimum and to use the Labour Party to hold down the struggle of the working people to defend their economic and political rights.

The first Labour government established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in February 1924 and introduced a law providing for an extension of the municipal housing programme, improved the system of distribution of unemployment benefits and pensions for invalids and the retired. A law was passed to improve wages for farm workers and the social services were expanded. The reforms of the Labour government did not go any further than this, for its members did not dare to infringe upon the privileges and property of the bourgeoisie. Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, noted that the budget drawn up by the Labour government "relieved the feelings of the rich, who had feared that there might be drastic impositions upon their class".³ MacDonald's government also made sure that it protected the interests of the bourgeoisie in the domain of foreign policy. The sum allocated to the armed forces was increased and the construction of cruisers that had begun under the Conservatives was continued. The government also followed in the footsteps of the Conservatives when it came to their dealings with the countries of the British Empire. Admittedly, Gandhi who was seriously ill at the time was released from prison, yet at the same time the rank and file of the national liberation movement were subjected to harsh repression.

The policies pursued by the Labour Party proved deeply disappoint-

¹ H. Pollitt, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Vol. I, 1953, London, 1953, p. 51.

² *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, Nos. 7-8, (54-55), July-August 1925, pp. 32-34.

³ P. Snowden, *An Autobiography*, Vol. 2 (1919-1934), London, 1934, p. 647.

ing to the masses. It was the Conservative Party which exploited this when they won the next elections in the autumn of 1924 and gained an overwhelming majority in parliament. Although the Labour Party won 5,500,000 votes, they lost 40 seats in parliament. This victory was followed by Stanley Baldwin being invited to form the next, Conservative government.

It was against this political background that the British proletariat waged their strike battles. In 1924, 613,000 workers took part in strikes (710 in all) as against 405,000 in 1923 (628 strikes in all).¹ Higher wages were demanded by railwaymen, dockers and public transport employees. The campaign for higher employment also gained considerable ground. In 1924, the movement of the unemployed adopted a Charter of the Unemployed, which demanded that public works projects be organised, that state bodies should be set up to raise employment levels, that the working day be shortened and that proper vocational training be provided. On July 1, 1924, many of British workers and unemployed demonstrated in support of these demands.

The major class battle during this period of temporary and partial stabilisation of capitalism was the General Strike of 1926. In June 1925, the mine-owners had announced their intention to replace the national collective agreement with the miners by a system of local agreements, to reduce wages (by between 4 and 13 per cent, depending upon the category of employee) and to disregard the previously accepted minimum wage. In response to this on July 30, 1925 a Special Conference of Trade Union Executives approved the plan drawn up by the General Council of the TUC to place an embargo on imports of coal from the end of July and granted the General Council the authority necessary for it to declare a strike in support of the miners' demands,

The government which had not expected such a turn of events made a concession: it granted the mine-owners state subsidies to enable them to pay the miners their former wages over a period of nine months. This decision was announced on Friday July 31. This partial victory for the workers went down in history as Red Friday.

However, after this concession the government began at once to prepare for the crushing of the labour movement. The length and breadth of the land volunteers were recruited for strike-breaker organisations. As it made ready to lead on the workers to launch a general strike, the government was moved by more than just purely economic considerations. The miners constituted the most

¹ V. G. Trukhanovsky, *A Recent History of Britain*, Moscow, 1958, p. 117 (in Russian).

militant detachment of the proletariat, and routing them in an open battle tied in well with the government's overall aims of stabilising the political domination of the capitalists and discrediting the general strike, the most formidable weapon of the working class in its struggle, along with all other forms of direct mass action.

Repressive measures were used against the most resolute advocates of mobilisation of the proletarian forces. In October 1925, twelve leaders of the Communist Party, including Harry Pollitt and William Gallacher, were arrested and brought to trial. All this should, according to the plans of the bourgeoisie, have seriously weakened the workers' movement.

The leadership of the Labour Party was also hostile in its attitude to the Communists. In the autumn of 1925, at the Labour Party Conference a resolution was adopted prohibiting the election of Communists as trade union delegates to Labour Party conferences. The Labour leaders took a negative view of general strikes as a method of proletarian struggle. They were still more alarmed at the prospect of a general strike developing into a political confrontation. The Labour leadership was worried at the growing influence enjoyed by the Communist Party and the Minority Movement which at that time united about a million workers. There was no doubt that a general strike would have strengthened the influence of the Communists and the Minority Movement. The Labour leadership was up against a serious dilemma: either it had to support the demands of the miners and risk a further strengthening of the left trend within the Labour movement, or it had to sacrifice the miners to its own reformist policies. Reluctant to make a clear choice one way or the other, the Labour leaders hesitated and this wavering, which temporarily paralysed the leaders of the Labour Party, played into the hands of the Conservative government.

The Communist Party adopted a very different stand. In January 1926, the Communists drew up and published a plan for preparing workers to stage a general strike in the course of which it was proposed that factory committees and trade union councils be set up, workers' self-defence detachments be organised, and also close liaison between workers and cooperatives be established. This plan was supported by the Minority Movement. The action programme it had adopted, in March 1926 played an undeniable role in preparing the working class for the clash that was drawing ever nearer.

At the beginning of March 1926, a report was published by the Royal Commission which had been studying the situation in the coal industry. The Commission recommended that miners' wages be reduced, although by a smaller margin than the mine-owners had been calling for. The General Council of the TUC was inclined to accept the recommendations of the Commission as a basis for

talks with the mine-owners. The miners, however, felt very differently. On May 4, 1926 a general strike began. Railwaymen, transport and print workers, and workers from other branches of industry came out in strike. Never before in the country's history had workers' action been on such a mass scale. The total of those involved came near the three-million mark.

Yet at the same time this strike revealed the weak spots in the British workers' movement, led as it was by reformists, and drew attention to the urgent problem of how the political leadership of the movement ought to be organised. The General Council sought to restrict the strike to one with purely economic ends. In the first issue of the General Council's strike bulletin it was declared that the strike was an economic battle and no more.¹ Alarmed at the spontaneous upsurge of the masses the TUC leaders called upon the strikers not to leave their houses in order to avoid clashes on the streets.

The factory strike committees and councils of action, which had often been set up despite the rulings of the General Council, assumed leadership of local activities. The strike bodies were set up in response to initiatives from the masses with active involvement of Communists and supporters of the Minority Movement. Resolutions regarding the setting up of strike committees were made public by workers at large well-attended rallies, and councils of action were elected at conferences of trade union delegates. In some areas larger organisations were set up to coordinate leadership of the struggle—united strike committees.

The activities of local strike bodies were of a militant nature. Councils of action organised strike pickets and workers' self-defence detachments; public collections were made in support of the strikers, propaganda work was carried out, strike bulletins which were to play an important part in rallying the support of the masses were published in defiance of the General Council's ban.

On a number of occasions councils of action carried out some functions of local government bodies. They were in control of the railways, ports and factories and ensured the normal functioning of life in the towns. In Newcastle strike committees organised canteens and worked hand in hand with local cooperatives to ensure the people had regular food supplies. In Blaydon and neighbouring towns according to newspaper reports, virtually all power during the period of the General Strike was in the hands of the councils of action.²

As the strike developed the need to come forward with political

¹ *The British Worker*, May 5, 1926.

² *The Labour Monthly*, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 1926, p. 383.

slogans became blatantly obvious. It was precisely in this direction that the workers were spurred on by the Communists. In the Communist Party's May 5th manifesto the need was stressed for the councils of action to throw out the clear watchwords: "Nationalise the Mines Without Compensation, Under Workers' Control!"¹ In some instances the Communist Party slogans became the slogans for local strike committees. In Chopwell, a rally attended by miners, mechanics and machinists demanded the resignation of Baldwin's government. However, on the whole the Communist Party of Great Britain did not have the necessary amount of influence to carry the masses along with it and to isolate the right-wing reformists.

The leaders of the General Council, who were afraid of losing control of the movement, endeavoured to bring the struggle to an end as quickly as possible. Behind the backs of the strikers they held talks with the government and made ready to capitulate. On May 12, the members of the Council who had gone to meet Baldwin announced that the strike was over and sent out circulars to this effect to local union organisations.

The strike was brought to an end by the right-wing leaders of the unions at a moment when there was no grounds for doing so. Engineering and ship-building workers had by that time joined the strike and the workers were firmly resolved to continue the struggle. The strike committees were finding their feet and links between them were being effectively coordinated. Well aware of this the Communist Party condemned the collaborationist role played by the General Council and called upon the workers to carry on the struggle.² The Communists suggested that an emergency meeting of the councils of action and strike committees be held in order to start the strike up again.

The decision taken by the trade union leaders confused the strikers and filled them with indignation. The United Strike Committee for Northumberland and Durham sent out an appeal stating that the General Council had left the workers defenceless in face of the most cruel harassment from local mine- and factory-owners. The appeal also stressed the importance of general strikes as a method for an active offensive by the workers. In this document addressed to the local workers they were called upon to make sacrifices if these were unavoidable and to remember that the struggle was not over.³ Despite the recommendations made by the General Council, workers in many mines and factories continued their strike action for several

¹ R. Arnot, *The General Strike, May 1926: Its Origin and History*, London, 1926, p. 180.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

³ P. V. Gurovich, *The General Strike of 1926 in Britain*, Moscow, 1959, p. 163 (in Russian).

days. The miners, who continued their strike until December 1926 manifested outstanding heroism and resolve. Only the moral and material support afforded them by workers from other countries including the Soviet working class, made it possible for them to hold out for such a long time.¹

Yet the outcome of the General Strike was a foregone conclusion. Denied as they were of support from the General Council and the unions the colliers had nothing for it but to return to work in the end.

The disruption of the strike by the right-wing leaders of the unions and the Labour Party left the bourgeoisie a free hand to do as it pleased. Large-scale sackings of worker activists began: hundreds of the organisers and participants in the General Strike were arrested and imprisoned. The main onslaught was directed against the Communist Party. The number of Communists arrested rose as high as 1,200. The General Council also joined in this harassment of the Communists. It gave instructions to its various sections to break off all links with unions which belonged to the Minority Movement.

The consequences of the strike's rout were grim for the British working class. In the summer of 1926 the miners' working day was increased from seven to eight hours by an act of Parliament. In 1927 the British Parliament passed a reactionary law entitled the Trade Disputes Act which banned sympathetic strikes (i.e., in solidarity with other workers) or political strikes. The organisers of and participants in "illegal" strikes were threatened with imprisonment. This act served virtually to legalise strike-breaking while prohibiting the organisation of pickets. In 1928, an act relating to the unemployed was passed, which both reduced the amount of unemployment benefit and deprived many former recipients of unemployment benefit of this right.

Yet despite the defeat the General Strike in Britain was to acquire major historical importance. With implications beyond the framework of an ordinary economic conflict it had become an unprecedented class battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the country's history. In its capacity as the most powerful protest by the proletariat in Western Europe during the period of the stabilisation of capitalism, the General Strike in Britain aroused wide-spread response abroad. It had dealt a powerful blow against the bourgeois myths of "a fading class struggle" and "an era of social peace".

In *France*, the bourgeoisie had considerable reserves at its disposal for consolidating its domination. The country's economy had suffered less than Britain's from the war and post-war upheavals. France had received considerable sums in the form of reparation payments from Germany, and its industrial output amounted to 109 per cent

¹ See Chapter 1 of this volume.

in 1924, and to 140 per cent in 1930 as compared to the 1913 level.

An appreciable shift towards the left had taken place in the country's political life over the same period. On May 11, 1924 Radicals and Socialists won a majority of seats in a parliamentary election after joining together to form a left-wing alliance, Cartel des Gauches. The political programme they put forward contained plans for an amnesty for those who had been involved in the revolutionary movement, for the extension of the right of association into trade unions to civil servants, for the reinstatement of those railway workers who had been dismissed during the strikes of 1920, for a single system of social insurance financed by employers, for legislation providing for a guaranteed eight-hour working day, for the separation of church from state, etc. The parties of the left also promised to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR.

The victory of the Cartel des Gauches at these elections resulted in the formation of a government led by Edouard Herriot. Although Herriot's government introduced a number of democratic measures, it did not carry out the major part of the Cartel des Gauches social programme. To make matters worse colonial wars were unleashed in Morocco and Syria.

The discouraging results of the bloc's policy gave rise to disappointment among its supporters and the coalition fell apart. It was replaced in 1926 by a right-wing coalition Union Nationale led by Raymond Poincaré, who relied for practical support on all bourgeois parties. The following election in 1928 resulted in a still wider margin of victory for the forces of the right.

During the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, a temporary recession in the activities of the labour movement was to be observed. Strikes for the main part were limited to those of an economic nature. In 1924, the metal-workers of Cherbourg and St. Etienne, the textile workers of Rouen and the car workers from the Citroen plant in Paris came out in strike. In 1925, strikes hit the construction, textile and ceramic industries. Forty thousand striking bank employees held out for a period of six weeks. The French working class was protesting against wage cuts, increased exploitation and demanding better measures for the protection of labour. In a number of cases strikes went one stage further to make political demands. The most striking instances of this were the workers' protests against the government's colonial policy.

These strikes took place against a background of a full-scale offensive on the part of French entrepreneurs, which explains why the majority of them achieved very little. The struggle of the working people was complicated further by stronger centrifugal trends now apparent in the trade union movement, stemming for the main part

from the policies pursued by the reformist leadership of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT).

The reformist leaders of the CGT even resorted to expelling from its ranks the revolutionary trade unions and so in 1922 the revolutionary trade unions were forced to set up a new trade union alliance—the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU). In keeping with the resolution passed by the 3rd Congress of the CGTU (late 1925-early 1926) this organisation was restructured to make the factory trade union organisation its basic unit. This revolutionary trade union organisation developed on a truly mass scale. The CGTU enjoyed most influence of all among France's railwaymen and metalworkers.

Considering as it did that trade union unity was its main objective, the CGTU suggested that a joint congress for the two organisations be held in order to achieve the unity. The leaders of the CGT rejected the proposal. Then in response to a suggestion made by the revolutionary trade unions, joint committees came to be set up to include representatives from both the CGT and the CGTU, who supported the demands of the working people. Left trends emerged in a number of CGT organisations representing specific branches of industry. In April 1925, the CGTU suggested that the grass-roots trade union organisations be merged together under the control of both Confederations and later that a joint congress be convened. Fifty CGT primary organisations supported this plan. The CGT Congress, held in August 1925, however, was to reject these proposals as well.¹

During the years of stabilisation of capitalism the Socialists had the upper hand in the labour movement. At the same time the leadership of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), which by this time found itself obliged to come to terms with the revolutionary mood of the French proletariat, held back from anti-communist extremes so common to the right wing of the social democratic parties world-wide. The SFIO leadership invariably rejected proposals from the bourgeois parties that it should join a coalition government and this enabled the party to retain a certain degree of independence in relation to bourgeois politics. In the period between 1924 and 1929 the centrist leadership of the SFIO allied itself more often than not with left trends, while the right wing of the party remained in opposition.

While refusing to participate in bourgeois governments, the SFIO leaders did, however, fail to carry out policies designed to further the class struggle.² The alliance with the Radicals for election pur-

¹ S. N. Gurvich, *The Labour Movement and the Cartel des Gauches in France (1921-1926)*, Moscow, 1966, p. 135 (in Russian).

² S. S. Salychev, *The French Socialist Party during the Inter-War Period-1921-1940*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 75-98 (in Russian).

poses limited their opportunities for independent political struggle and made it impossible for them to oppose the anti-labour policy of those governments.

The SFIO leaders adopted measures aimed at restricting mass struggle. A revealing example of this is provided by the stand they adopted in relation to the colonial war unleashed by the French imperialists in Morocco (1925-1926). In parliament and in the press the leaders of the Socialist Party condemned the war and campaigned for a resolution of the conflict by peaceful means. At the same time, however, they would not engage in any action either independently, or on a joint basis with the French Communist Party (FCP), to develop the mass-scale anti-war movement. In August 1925, an extraordinary congress of the SFIO forbade party members from working in conjunction with Communists in action committees, which were organising the mass anti-war movement, demanding that all Socialists leave these committees under the pain of expulsion if they should refuse. In practice the SFIO leadership used these objections against cooperation with the Communists to mask its own negative attitude to the involvement of rank-and-file Socialists in the mass movement.

With regard to the Poincaré government the SFIO leadership pursued what Léon Blum was to refer to as a policy of well-meaning opposition.¹ One of the party leaders, Daniel Ligou, admitted how moderate SFIO criticism of Poincaré was, "almost always doctrinaire and theoretical, sometimes academic rather than militant".²

The Socialist Party which had the support of between 18 and 20 per cent of the electorate and also that of the largest union organisation—the CGT—constituted an impressive force in French political life, with which the ruling circles were obliged to reckon. Yet the reluctance of the SFIO leaders to move beyond the confines of parliamentary struggle significantly reduced its potential for defending the social and economic interests of the working people. But, most importantly of all, the reformist line adopted by the SFIO leaders undermined the political activity of the working masses and thus the fighting capacity of the working class. The socialist leaders held aloof from practical training of the proletariat for independent political struggle.

The French Communist Party, on the other hand, directed its efforts at solving this crucial and highly complex problem facing the labour movement. Only when we take into account the innovatory and other highly complex aspects of this task is it possible to arrive

¹ Quoted from *An Outline History of the Labour Movement in France (1917-1967)*, Moscow, 1968, p. 86 (in Russian).

² Daniel Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961)*, Paris, 1962, p. 367.

at a correct assessment of the importance that should be attached to both the achievements and setbacks on the path of the French Communists as they sought to lead the masses to involve themselves in independent political struggle.

First of all, work had to be completed so as finally to set up a party of a new type. In 1924, the reorganisation of the FCP on the basis of factory cells had turned party cells into focal centres for political initiative with respect to the organisation of the masses, and it had made it possible to consolidate the proletarian nucleus of the party. In the course of this reorganisation the Leninist core of the FCP had had to withstand persistent resistance both from the right grouping within the party (led by such men as Fernand Loriot and others) and also from the syndicalist group (led by such men as Pierre Monatte and Alfred Rosmer). Resistance to the reorganisation from such quarters had made the party's position more difficult and represented one of the factors which accounted for the temporary drop in membership at the time.¹ In the long term, however, the reorganisation of the party and the establishment of a truly Marxist-Leninist leadership which included Jacques Duclos, Marcel Cachin, Pierre Semard and Maurice Thorez served to consolidate the party's fighting efficiency to a significant degree.

A major achievement of the FCP was the organisation of mass protest against the colonial wars waged by the French imperialists in Morocco and Syria. As soon as hostilities began in Morocco in the spring of 1925, the FCP put forward a demand for immediate peace, for independence for the Rif Republic and the withdrawal of French troops from Morocco. The Communists called upon the French soldiers to fraternise with the insurgents.² To coordinate the struggle against the colonial wars an Action Committee was set up with Maurice Thorez at its head. It was joined by the FCP, the CGTU, the Republican Association of War Veterans (ARAC) and a group known as Clarté (Light) which embraced the progressive intelligentsia. Similar committees were set up in other parts of France apart from the capital. Action committees organised anti-war rallies, called upon the dockers to boycott ships taking military cargoes to Morocco and carried out propaganda work among the troops making ready to be sent to Morocco. The appeals from the committees met with a wide response among the dockers in Le Havre, and among the workers and sailors in other ports.³

In early July, on the initiative of the action committees, anti-war workers' conferences were held in a number of large cities.

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste française (manuel)*, Paris, 1964, pp. 170-81.

² *A History of France*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 117 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 118-19; also *An Outline History of the Labour Movement in France (1917-1967)*, p. 72.

However, a lack of unity in the labour movement made the spread of the mass struggle impossible. The SFIO leadership turned down proposals from the FCP for joint action.¹

The splitting tactics pursued by the socialist leaders and CGT leaders, on the one hand, and the repressive measures instigated by the government, on the other, made it harder but not impossible to carry on the anti-war campaign. The mass political strike protesting against the war in Morocco scheduled for October 12, 1925 took place. Nine hundred thousand workers took part in it. The anti-war strike was supported by certain local CGT union organisations. First steps were taken in the factories to pave the way towards a "united-front" policy.

The campaign against the war in Morocco under communist leadership was an important turning point in the history of the French labour and communist movements. The vanguard of the working class, which had turned its back on colonialism and chauvinism, had for the first time in the country's history afforded effective support to the national liberation movement of the colonial peoples.²

The election tactics and parliamentary work of the FCP were subordinated to the Party's aims to develop the political education of the working masses. Just before the parliamentary election in 1924 the FCP turned to the SFIO with a proposal that the parties should set up an alliance of workers and peasants and join forces against the bourgeois parties.

This proposal was rejected by the SFIO leadership. Therefore the FCP conducted its election campaign under the slogan: "The worker-peasant bloc is a means by which labour will be liberated."³ This was the Communist Party's first attempt to take part in an election campaign.

The FCP won around 10 per cent of the votes at these elections (875,000). Twenty-six Communists were elected to the Chamber of Deputies. This was a considerable achievement for a party that had only just begun to master the methods of parliamentary struggle. At the same time it should be noted that the FCP made certain tactical miscalculations. In its exposition of the Party's main aims the Communists did not devote sufficient attention to the everyday needs of the workers. In its election propaganda not enough emphasis was placed upon the differences between the alliance of right-wing parties, the Bloc National, and the Cartel des Gauches. Such factors made the election campaign of the Communists less effective.⁴

After the 1924 election the FCP's election tactics became more

¹ *An Outline History of the Labour Movement in France (1917-1967)*, pp. 79-80.

² *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, pp. 183-84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.

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flexible. The 4th Congress of the FCP held in Clichy-la-Garonne in January 1925 decided, after discussing the line the party should take in relation to the imminent municipal elections, that in certain cases the FCP ought to support the Cartel des Gauches.¹ The acceptance of the need for specific agreements with the Socialists and Radicals meant the introduction of new tactics which were later to be referred to as "Clichy tactics". These new tactics involving the idea of an alliance between the left parties was an important gain for the FCP.

In November 1925, the Central Committee of the FCP issued a manifesto in which it declared its readiness to "protect any government of the Cartel des Gauches or purely socialist government against reactionary attacks" provided that it stood for democratic social reforms and a cessation of the colonial wars in Syria and Morocco.²

In the 1925 election and in 1926 by-elections the Communists raised the question of an electoral alliance bringing together the three parties of the left (Communists, Socialists and Radicals). In the by-elections to the Chamber of Deputies (in Paris, in particular), in the second round of the voting, the three left parties supported each other and this resulted in victories for their respective candidates.

The 5th FCP Congress (June 1926) accepted as possibilities temporary agreements in pursuit of specific goals (such as in the fight against fascism) with bourgeois-democratic organisations.

All in all, the Communist Party succeeded during the years of partial stabilisation of capitalism in maintaining and even strengthening its influence among the voters. At the parliamentary election in 1928 1,063,000 votes were cast for FCP candidates, which represented an increase of 181,000 on the 1924 figure. The Communists emerged victorious in 70 municipalities in 1925.

Yet there were still numerous problems facing the FCP. The very situation of partial stabilisation of capitalism, the consolidation of the economic and political foundations of the bourgeois domination exerted tremendous political and ideological pressure that caused certain Communists to waver. The ruling circles went out of their way to encourage such wavering, pursuing the policy of isolation and repression against the Communist Party, while collaborating with and wishing well to reformists. By the summer of 1929 government repressions reached their height. At the end of July 1929 Maurice Thorez and a number of other party leaders were arrested, the Workers' and Peasants' Bank, in which *L'Humanité* kept its funds, was prevented from operating for the time being, while the buildings housing both the newspaper and the Central Committee's offices were

¹ S. N. Gurvich, *The Labour Movement and the Cartel des Gauches in France (1921-1926)*, p. 101.

² *L'Humanité*, November 25, 1925.

taken over. This meant that the FCP was now only a semi-legal party.

These repressions, however, did not frighten the party into submission. The Communists organised an anti-war demonstration on August 1, 1929 which had previously been banned by the government and launched a mass protest movement against police repressions. Meanwhile the police action which had temporarily weakened the FCP leadership brought to the fore opportunist trends within the party's ranks. The group led by Henri Barbé and Pierre Célor made the most of the advantage provided by the arrests to take over the party leadership and divert the FCP to a sectarian course aimed at fanning enmity between Communists and Socialists and at replacing patient propaganda work among the masses by revolutionary phrase-mongering. Violating all accepted practices of inner-party democracy, Barbé and Célor foisted high-handed methods of leadership on the party. The work of opportunist groups, particularly that led by Barbé and Célor, dealt the party tremendous harm.

Germany remained the weakest link in the chain of the capitalist system in Europe. The Weimar Republic which had emerged from the ruins of the bitter class battles in the November Revolution was built on very shaky foundations indeed. This edifice was shaken not only by social conflicts stemming from the class antagonism between labour and capital, but also by the struggle between the supporters and opponents of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary system.

After the defeat of the revolutionary vanguard in 1923 the workers of Germany confined themselves mainly to economic battles. The number of strikes in 1924 compared to that in the previous year was down by 25 per cent, while the number of workers engaging in strike action was 150 per cent fewer. In 1927, the pre-war level of industrial production had been reached.

The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the reformist trade unions devoted a good deal of effort to convincing the workers that the stabilisation of the economy, and in particular capitalist rationalisation, would make possible the resolution of urgent social problems. At the Berlin Congress of the SPD in the summer of 1924, despite protests from the opposition, the right-wing leaders carried through resolutions supporting "economic reconstruction", the "Dawes Plan" and cooperation with the bourgeois parties. At the same time any contact with Communists was rejected out of hand.

Despite demands from certain delegates to oppose pressure from industrialists to keep wages down, to lengthen working hours and to curtail trade union rights by means of compulsory arbitration and to do away with the system of tariff rate contracts, resolutions were adopted by the Congress of German Trade Unions in Breslau in

August-September 1925 calling for cooperation between the trade unions and the employers' organisations on an equal footing in economic chambers and for support for capitalist rationalisation.

The SPD Congress in Heidelberg, held in September 1925, adopted a new party programme in which it was firmly stated that the bourgeois Weimar Republic provided "the most fertile soil for the implementation of socialism".¹

In his report on the Programme, Rudolf Hilferding asserted that in Germany the bourgeois character of the state had been overcome and that the successes of the SPD in parliamentary elections and the policy of cooperation with the bourgeois parties at government level would serve to enhance the influence enjoyed by the Social Democrats and the trade unions over the state organs of power and would result in a subordination of the capitalist monopolies to the interests of society as a whole. This political course aimed at integrating the Social Democrats into the system of bourgeois society and the parliamentary regime went hand in hand with an unequivocal rejection of any cooperation with Communists, an increasing trend of anti-communism and efforts to deepen the split in the labour movement.

The only political party which during this ebbing of the revolutionary tide appealed to the working class to ensure the continuation of organised resistance and to defend its own vital interests was the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). The KPD unmasked the imperialist nature of the Dawes Plan and the Locarno Agreements, which were really designed by the Western powers to transform Germany into the main strike force against the USSR. It campaigned against the encroachment on the working people's democratic rights and social gains by monopoly capital, and encouraged the proletariat to organise effective resistance to nazism correctly assessing this phenomenon as the main threat to the working class.²

The temporary strengthening of the ranks of the "ultra-left" group dealt a good deal of harm to the party at this time. The group rejected the united-front policy and the proletariat's class alliances and came out against the party's reorganisation on the basis of industrial cells. The party thus found itself forced to embark upon a dangerous path leading to isolation from the masses. By the end of 1925, however, the KPD, with support from the Executive Committee of the Comintern, had overcome these inner-party difficulties. At the 1st Party Conference in 1925 (October 31-November 1) the "ultra-left" group was dislodged from the party leadership. Ernst Thälmann was elected party chairman. The election of a Central Committee consisting of staunch Leninists marked an important turning point in

¹ *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1925 in Heidelberg. Protokoll mit dem Bericht der Frauenkonferenz*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 5-10.

² *Faschismusforschung. Positionen, Probleme, Polemik*, Cologne, 1980, p. 324.

the party's history. Work now began to ensure that Leninist ideological and organisational principles be introduced to the party and that the party structure be reorganised on the basis of industrial cells. First steps were taken to embark upon broad-scale propaganda among the masses calling for a united workers' front and for active involvement of Communists in the work of the trade unions.¹

In the mid-1920s a protest movement in Germany emerged, sparked off by plans to restore property to the dynasties which had been overthrown after the November Revolution. When Prussia's social democratic government introduced a bill providing for "compensation" payments to the family of the former Kaiser and Prussian king of the Hohenzollern dynasty to the tune of 185,000,000 marks (in addition to a pension of 600,000 marks) this gave rise to widespread indignation. The KPD introduced a bill to the Reichstag calling for the confiscation of property belonging to the former princes in order that the resultant funds might be used to improve the lot of the impoverished peasants, to provide unemployment benefits and relief payments to the sick, war invalids and families of the war dead.

On December 2, 1925 the Central Committee of the KPD sent an open letter to the leaders of the SPD and the trade unions with an appeal to mount a joint campaign for a nation-wide referendum on the confiscation of the princes' property. When this appeal failed to produce a response, many local KPD organisations approached grass-roots SPD organisations, workers' mass organisations and also various democratic associations with proposals for joint action. Joint committees were set up locally bringing together communist, social democratic and non-party workers and activists from youth organisations—all under the slogan "Not a penny for the Princes!" "Let the Princes have the doss-houses and the people all the castles!" The leading representatives of the progressive intelligentsia also joined the campaign: Albert Einstein, writers Carl von Ossietzky and Kurt Tucholsky, the artists Käthe Kollwitz and Heinrich Zille, the playwright Erwin Piscator and many others besides. A special committee was set up under Professor René Robert Kuczynski to carry out a survey of public opinion. The movement soon assumed nation-wide proportions.

The leaders of the SPD and the Federation of German Trade Unions (ADGB) were obliged to support the demand put forward by the Communist Party for such a survey. In January 1926, an agreement providing for joint action was reached between the KPD, the Kuczynski Committee, the SPD and the ADGB.

Despite a virulent slander campaign and acts of terrorism instigated by the reactionaries, in March 1926, 12,500,000 German citizens

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 4, Berlin, 1966, pp. 98-104

who enjoyed the right to vote officially committed themselves to demanding a law calling for the confiscation of the princes' property.

On June 20, 1926, 14,500,000 voters came out in favour of such a law. Although the figure required by the constitution of twenty million was not achieved in time, the results of the referendum bore witness to a major success for the Communists. Ernst Thälmann noted that the party had succeeded in rousing the broad masses of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie and in forging a united front from their ranks.

In the autumn of 1926, the KPD concentrated its efforts on searching for methods of struggle against the social consequences of capitalist rationalisation. The October strike of 18,000 Hamburg dockers was, according to Thälmann, the first major test of strength for the German unions confronted by capitalist rationalisation. It drew attention to the possibilities for achieving unity "from below", despite the line adopted by the leaders of the trade unions and the SPD.

To consolidate the united front achieved by the working class and its alliance with the working peasantry and the middle strata of the urban population, which had emerged at the time of the referendum, the KPD launched a campaign to convene an all-German congress of working people. The Congress that was in session between December 3 and 5, 1926 in Berlin adopted a militant programme of protest against capitalist rationalisation. The Congress delegates opted for the slogan: "No Dictatorship by the Trusts!" and proceeded to advocate the nationalisation of the banks and trusts, to reduce the working week to 47 hours, raise wages, give more rights to production councils and involve workers, peasants and the middle strata of the urban population in the fight against capitalism. Two thousand delegates attended the Congress: Communists, Social Democrats, non-party workers, and representatives of peasant organisations.

The successes of the Communists and the organised labour movement could not, however, hold back the consolidation of the reactionary forces at the time. Paul von Hindenburg, a confirmed monarchist and former Field-Marshal to the Kaiser, was elected President of the Weimar Republic in the spring of 1925. His election reflected the growing influence enjoyed by reactionary forces in German political life both at home and abroad.

At the beginning of 1926, the Alliance for the Renewal of the Empire was formed, which published a programme calling for further strengthening the power invested in the President and the government and for harsher repressive measures against revolutionary organisations.¹ Powerful support for the reactionaries and militarists

¹ W. Ruge, *Hindenburg. Porträt eines Militaristen*, Berlin, 1977, pp. 240-41.

was provided by the Stahlhelm (Steel-Helmet) organisation which numbered over 500,000 members.

Hitler's followers who had retreated into the background for a time after the failure of the "nazi putsch" in 1923 were now regrouping their forces. In 1925, Hitler announced the rebirth of the German National-Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP) and a nazi faction came into being in the Reichstag. In 1924-1929, Hitler and his followers were preparing for their struggle to gain power, consolidating their ties with German bankers and industrial concerns and also with the military and representatives of Junkerdom.

In order to protect the Republic and its constitution the Social Democrats set up in February 1924 an organisation of republican ex-servicemen known as Bundesrat des Reichsbanners which brought together anti-militarist and anti-monarchist industrial and white-collar workers. However, this new organisation was by no means always used to oppose the militarists and fascists. Its statute adopted in 1926 banned the membership of Communists in the organisation and also banned members from engaging in any joint activities with Communists.

The leaders of the Social Democrats, blinded by their anti-communist prejudice, not only failed to combat nazism but went as far as pandering to it. In 1927, the President of the Reichstag Paul Löbe made an appeal for "fair treatment" of Hitler's men and spoke out against steps to hold in check their provocations. Prussia's Minister of the Interior Albert Grzesinski said that the leader of the fascists should be allowed complete freedom of action, basing his decision on the fact that the nazis did not represent any threat to the Republic.¹

Despite this renewed pressure from the imperialists the Communist Party continued to work among the masses on an increasingly wide scale, aiming at winning over the majority of the working class to its side. In 1924, the Communists set up a militant mass organisation of the working class known as the League of Red Front-Liners and a youth organisation called Red Youth-storm. The first conference of the League was held in February 1925 in Berlin and Ernst Thälmann was elected to preside over it. By the spring of 1927 the League of Red Front-Liners had 1,640 local groups and numbered over 100,000 members.

The members of the League protected workers' meetings and demonstrations from attacks by reactionary forces, defended strike pickets, and carried out propaganda work among workers. These units who bravely stood up to militarist and revanchist plotting

¹ L. I. Ginzberg, *The Labour and Communist Movements in Germany in the Struggle against Nazism (1919-1933)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 188 (in Russian).

constituted the militant bastion of the KPD, its staunch reserve force.

In 1927, the period of the decline in the strike movement in Germany came to an end. The new stage was marked by a considerable spread in the strike movement. The number of striking workers rose to 329,000 in 1928 as opposed to 60,000 in 1926, and the number of lost working days rose nine and a half times to reach 8,500,000. Workers were demanding that collective agreements be reviewed, wages raised and an eight-hour working day introduced again. The influence of the Communist Party was stronger now as indeed was that of revolutionary sections within the trade union movement and other mass organisations of working people. A left opposition emerged within the Social Democratic Party.

The factory-owners responded to the growing strike movement with mass dismissals.¹ In November 1928, an association of entrepreneurs from the iron and steel industries in the north-west of the country flatly turned down workers' demands for increased wages and for the introduction of an eight-hour working day and then proceeded to dismiss without more ado 213,000 metal-workers. This not only dealt a cruel blow to the workers concerned, but also represented a direct infringement of labour legislation, in other words a challenge to the Republic's Constitution.

The Communist Party went out of its way to organise the strikers and to encourage sympathetic strikes from workers in other branches of industry. On the Communists' initiative a Central Strike Committee was set up, which enjoyed the support of 118,000 workers.² Yet the collaborationist policy pursued by the right-wing leaders of the SPD and the ADGB, which had turned down the proposal from the Central Strike Committee for a general strike, prevented the workers from defending their rights and interests.

The conflict in the iron and steel industries in the north-west, the strike by metal-workers in Hennigsdorf (at the beginning of 1929), which went on for 14 weeks, and other economic strikes of this period were of a particularly grim character. The strike committees which were set up in the course of these class battles acted as committees promoting the unity of working-class action.

This intensification of the class struggle in Germany coincided with the election to the Reichstag that was held in the spring of 1928. At this election the SPD won nine million votes (29.8 per cent of the total) and the KPD over three million votes. The Social

¹ W. Ruge, *Deutschland von 1917 bis 1933 (Von der Großen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik)*, Berlin, 1978, p. 324.

² *Ibid.*, p. 325; also *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 4, pp. 189-93.

Democrat Hermann Müller was called upon to form a "grand coalition" government.

The Social Democrats carried further the policies of the bourgeois alliance governments that had gone before. In August 1928, the cabinet decided to build one of four large battleships—Battleship A. The news of this decision which marked a step towards the revival of the German war machine aroused a storm of indignation in the country. The KPD called for a mass protest campaign against militarism and war preparations, for a people's initiative and a referendum on the building of the warships. Many social democratic organisations protested as well and demanded that the government resign and that the ministers be expelled from the SPD. Once again, as during the campaign against the princes, the country was swept by rallies and demonstrations. Representatives of the democratic intelligentsia also played an active part in this movement, including Albert Einstein, Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig, Bernhard Kellermann, Käthe Kollwitz and Heinrich Zille. Signatures were collected on petitions calling for a referendum. Yet because of the opposition from the SPD leaders and the bourgeois parties the campaign did not achieve its target.

In their efforts to stem the rise of the militant mood of the workers, the reactionaries demanded that harsh measures be taken against the working people. Chiefs of police and ministers of the interior in the lands, whose posts were often filled by Social Democrats, outlawed the communist press, communist demonstrations and meetings. Sad notoriety was won by the Social Democrat Chief of Police in Berlin Karl Zörgiebel who gave orders to fire upon a peaceful workers' demonstration on May 1, 1929. Indignant at this arbitrary action by the police the workers of Wedding and Neukölln spontaneously took up arms and put up barricades. In the course of the clashes with the police that followed 31 workers were killed and many hundreds wounded.¹

The KPD led the self-defence action by the Berlin workers, warning them at the same time against action that might lead to civil war. In response to the Communist Party's appeal mass political strikes and demonstrations in protest against the ruthless repressions in Berlin were organised for the first time since 1923 in Berlin, Chemnitz, Hamburg, Halle and other cities.

The 12th Congress of the KPD which was held in the Berlin district of Wedding in June 1929 warned the delegates of the danger of nazism, of the path the powerful capitalists were taking towards the abolition of democratic freedoms and the establishment of an unabashed dictatorship. The Congress agreed that the immediate tasks for

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 4, pp. 198-99.

the Communists were to win over the bulk of the working class to the side of the KPD, and to rally together all the working people in the struggle against reaction and the threat of war.¹

The stabilisation of capitalism in *Austria*, as stressed by Johann Koplenig, bore a more vacillating and a more shaky character than in the other capitalist countries.² In 1927, the output of the coal industry had reached 114 per cent in comparison with the 1923 level, yet it covered only a third of the country's needs. Iron ore output had only reached 81.3 per cent of the pre-war level. It was the working people themselves who had to bear the brunt of this temporary stabilisation. The state budget was balanced by recourse to purchase tax, i.e., indirect taxation on the consumer. Workers' wages were being reduced all over the country.

The economic policy of the bourgeois government met with popular resistance. In response to this the bourgeoisie kept resorting more and more frequently to methods of fascist terror. Fascist armed detachments, known as the Heimwehr, were being organised on a wide scale: they emulated the policies of the Italian fascists and the nazis who were seeking to establish fascism in Germany and the union (or Anschluss) of Austria with Germany.

In this complicated situation the Austrian working class lacked the appropriate leadership to cope with the situation. In 1926, the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria (SAO) had over 600,000 members of whom 52 per cent were workers. This party usually received one and a half million votes and it was the second most important party in Parliament, with only a few less seats than the ruling party. Yet the social democratic leaders were unable, and, because of their anti-communist prejudice, reluctant to harness the militant potential of the labour movement, which in Austria had retained its post-1918 revolutionary ardour to a greater extent than in many other countries. In its declarations and policy documents, however, the SAO struck a fairly radical note. In 1926, the party congress adopted a new programme, in which it declared that were the party to come to power and to meet with resistance from the bourgeoisie when it started implementing social reforms, then it would have to crush that resistance by "dictatorial methods". The party's main newspaper warned the bourgeoisie that "if it were necessary the Social Democrats would not hesitate to show those gentlemen what the Vienna workers thought and really wanted". Such statements gave rise to the illusion among the workers that their social democratic leaders were militant revolutionaries.

The Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) was small, with under

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, pp. 204-09.

² *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 44, August 3, 1928, p. 776.

4,000 members. Factional differences which had beset it for many years were only overcome in early 1927.

As fascist violence escalated, so the militant mood of the broad mass of the working people hardened. Events in the small industrial town of Schattendorf aroused the anger and indignation of workers throughout the whole of Austria. On Friday, January 30, 1927 the fascists opened fire on an unarmed workers' demonstration. One worker and an eight-year-old child were killed and several of the demonstrators were wounded. By February 2, the following Monday, protest strikes had begun in Vienna factories; in Floridsdorf (workers' district of Vienna) demonstrations took place. A mass protest rally was organised in front of the Rathaus.¹ SAO leaders made an appeal for a fifteen-minute stoppage on the day of the funeral for the Schattendorf victims of fascist violence.

In the situation that had now taken shape the Communist Party attached great importance to a united anti-fascist front. On March 7, 1927, the Communist Party turned to the SAO leaders in an open letter promising to support their candidates at the forthcoming parliamentary election, if they begin the campaign to have fascist organisations disbanded, to have fascists dismissed from the state apparatus and the army, to arm the working class and to improve its economic condition. In his answer, published in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Otto Bauer declared, however, that no fascist threat existed.²

The SAO leadership approached the election confident of victory. In 1923, after the parliamentary election, when the SAO had won 300,000 votes more than in 1920, Otto Bauer had declared that if they won an additional 300,000 this time, the Social Democrats would be in a position to set up their own government.³ However Bauer's hopes of achieving power by parliamentary means did not bear fruit. At the election of April 24, 1927, the Christian-Social Party emerged victorious once more.

The new cabinet led by Ignaz Seipel was even more reactionary than the one before. In June, the leaders of the republican Schutzbund, the organisation of workers' detachments for self-defence, set up by the SAO in response to demands by party members in April 1923, to guard workers' meetings and demonstrations from fascist attacks, gave in to the demands from the government that they should hand over all the arms still in the possession of the organisation. On July 14, a court acquitted the Schattendorf but-

¹ O. Leichter, *Glanz und Ende der Ersten Republik*, Vienna, 1964, pp. 45-46.

² E. Zucker-Schilling, *Er diente seiner Klasse. Eine Biographie. Mit Reden und Schriften von Johann Koplenig*, Vienna, 1971, pp. 37, 102-07; J. Koplenig, *Reden und Aufsätze. 1924-1950*, Vienna, 1951, pp. 17-23.

³ O. Leichter, op. cit., p. 36.

chers. The next day spontaneous protest rallies began in the factories of Vienna. Protest demonstrations marched towards the Palace of Justice. The police once more fired on unarmed demonstrators. Workers replied with a hail of stones. Chasing after the policemen, the workers forced their way through to the Palace of Justice and threw papers out of its windows. The police reinforcements who then joined the fray opened fire on the assembled crowd. Barricades were put up. Close on 20,000 workers, including some Schutzbund men, started fighting the fascists on the streets of Vienna. Railwaymen tried to stop troops being brought in from the provinces. In these battles an active part was played by the Communists who showed themselves to be resolute opponents of fascism. In a pamphlet written by Johann Koplenig, the General Secretary of the KPÖ, which was distributed among the demonstrators on July 15, the Communist Party called for all fascist organisations to be disarmed and disbanded.¹

The Board of the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions declared a 24-hour general strike, thus confining protest strike action to this short period. At the same time they called for an end to demonstrations and at midnight on July 18 they succeeded in bringing to an end strikes on the railways, in the postal services, telegraph and telephone communications.

During the two days of these July 1927 clashes the Vienna workers lost 85 dead, and over a thousand of their number were wounded. Johann Koplenig was arrested and brought to trial.

This action by the Viennese proletariat had one purpose: to express anger at fascist terror. The workers did not put forward any revolutionary demands and their action was aimed at upholding bourgeois democracy. The workers' fight lacked organisation and leadership. Although the working class was defeated, the July events played an important part in both the Austrian and international labour movements. They represented the first mass-scale anti-fascist action, and had brought out the opportunity for setting up a united front of social democratic and communist workers. July 1927 provided the first rehearsal for joint anti-fascist action.

In *Belgium*, after reaping success at the 1925 parliamentary election, the Belgian Workers' Party (POB) entered the government together with Catholics and Liberals. At that period the POB was an association of independent local organisations: leagues, trade unions, cooperatives, mutual assistance societies, etc.

As soon as they entered the government the Socialists went back on a large number of their pre-election promises. New taxes were introduced, wages were reduced for certain categories of industrial

¹ J. Koplenig, *Reden und Aufsätze. 1924-1950*, pp. 24-25.

and white-collar workers and legal restrictions on the length of the working day were lifted. This attack by the ruling circles on the rights and vital interests of working people led to widespread discontent among the rank and file of the POB with the reformist policies of their leaders. In 1926, under mass pressure the Socialists resigned from the government and went over to the opposition.

In the second half of the 1920s workers' action was usually of a defensive nature, although it was on a mass-scale and determined in character. An illustrious page in the history of the Belgian labour movement was provided by the strike of the miners from the Ourthe valley, which began in 1927. For two and a half years the miners waged a tenacious struggle, which was finally crowned with success. Belgian Communists played an active part in this strike. In 1928, the textile workers of Ghent went on strike, together with workers from the munitions factories in Liège, from the ship-repair yards in Antwerp and from factories in Brussels, Mons, Namur and other cities. The government was forced to introduce a number of measures to improve social insurance.

The most influential associations within the Belgian labour movement were two trade union organisations that supported the Catholic and the Socialist parties respectively. The leaders of these trade unions campaigned for the resolution of social conflicts by talks with employers, through parity committees that carried out the function of mediator between workers and employers.

Both the leaders of the Catholic trade unions and those of the unions affiliated to the POB took a hostile view of Communists. In August 1924, the leading body of the POB trade unions—the Trade Union Commission—banned members of the Communist Party from assuming prominent posts in trade union associations that were affiliated to the Commission. In order to consolidate their position in the trade union movement the Communists were forced to set up their own autonomous trade unions. After tremendous effort, Julien Lahaut, a selfless champion of the proletariat's class struggle, succeeded in 1926 in setting up an autonomous trade union known as Knights of Labour, that was joined by metal-workers and miners from Wallonia. The Communists also formed several other autonomous trade unions.

Belgian Communists were the most active organisers and participants in this mass action of working people, although they did not succeed in significantly extending their influence in the labour movement. The work of the Communists was made significantly more difficult in view of the position adopted by the leadership of the POB which refused out of hand to work with the Communists. The Communist Party was also beset by inner-party differences. In the second half of the 1920s, its membership dropped and a grim struggle in

the leadership went on against representatives of sectarian and Trotskyite groups. The work of the Trotskyites meant that it took the Communist Party far longer to elaborate correct tactics for political struggle than need have been the case. In March 1928, the Trotskyites were expelled from the POB.

The social-reformist course adopted by the leaders of the POB headed by Emile Vandervelde did not meet with the approval of the rank and file. Particularly harsh criticism of these leaders was to be heard from a group of left socialists. This group did not, however, have a clearly defined programme: while criticising traditional reformism, the left socialists steered clear of truly revolutionary politics and had fallen prey to anti-communist bias. The left socialists commanded a good deal of support in the Brussels Federation of the POB, in which Isabella Blum played a prominent part. While forces were being regrouped in the POB, a neo-socialist trend emerged whose mentor and apostle was to be Handrik de Man, who advocated the ideas of "authoritarian socialism".¹

The Belgian Socialists played an important part in the international social democratic movement. Emile Vandervelde was the President of the Second International and—from 1929 to 1936—of the Labour and Socialist International. After his death this post passed to another prominent figure from among Belgian Social Democrats—Louis de Brouckère, and then in 1939 to yet another Belgian, Camille Huysmans.

In the *Netherlands*, after mass action by the working people in 1923 there was a decline in the activities of the labour movement, to be accounted for by the favourable economic situation, on the one hand, and the onslaught by the bourgeoisie to undermine the democratic gains achieved by the working class, on the other hand. The labour movement was weakened not merely by a drop in levels of mass action but also because of a profound split in its ranks.

It was in the trade union movement that the differences in the ranks of the working class came to the fore most conspicuously. The largest trade union association in the country was the Netherlands Trade Union Federation that was affiliated to the Social Democratic Workers' Party and that had a membership of 184,000 in 1926. The vast majority of Catholic working people joined Catholic unions (these had a total membership of 117,000 in 1926). That same year the Protestant trade union organisation known as the Christian National Union had a membership of 67,000. The leaders of these three leading trade union bodies concentrated all their activities on resolving minor socio-economic questions. The influence of the National Workers' Secretariat that was affiliated to the Prof-

¹ For a more detailed account, see Chapter 6 of this volume.

intern was negligible: in 1926, it only had 12,000 members.

In 1926, the Catholic Universal League which united the numerous autonomous associations of Catholic voters set itself up as a political party—the Roman Catholic State Party. Rigid party discipline that banned Catholics from cooperating with other parties or trade unions led to the isolation of those workers who supported the new Catholic party from other detachments of the labour movement.

Most Dutch workers were members of the Social Democratic Workers' Party whose leaders were pursuing reformist policies and opposed mass action by the workers.

The vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party of Holland (CPH) was going through a difficult period. The leftist trends represented by such of its leaders as David Wijnkoop, Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst who adopted a "left communist" stand were responsible for the decline in communist influence in the trade unions and for the rift that emerged between the party and the masses.

In 1925, David Wijnkoop left the Communist Party and set up the so-called Communist Party of the Netherlands. At the 1926 Congress of the Communist Party of Holland the leftist faction was condemned and the "left Communists" were expelled from the party. In 1927, a group of Trotskyites led by Snevliet was expelled from the CPH. Yet even after this it took the CPH some time to work out correct political tactics. Van Het Reve and his supporters took over the leadership of the party and they opted for a path of right-wing opportunism. The removal from the CPH ranks of various sectarian and opportunist groups in the late 1920s was the necessary starting point for elaborating a correct political course. In the parliamentary election of 1929 the CPH won 37,600 votes, Wijnkoop's group 29,900 and Snevliet's 21,800.

During the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism, the Dutch working class did not succeed in setting up a united front in view of various political and religious barriers. Strikes of the workers employed at the factories of the electrical firm Philips, at textile plants, and action taken by workers on the large farms in the province of Groningen were local rather than national in their implications.

In *Switzerland*, the economic crisis of 1920-1923 that had resulted from the reconversion was followed by a period of relatively steady economic growth. The economic situation of the working people improved, although the cost of living index had not yet reached its pre-war level. Workers' wages rose a little, particularly in the spheres of industry geared to exports.

Certain sections of the Swiss proletariat fell prey to the illusion of crisis-free development as a result of this favourable economic situa-

tion. This in turn led to an overall decline in levels of working-class struggle. While in 1920 there had been 174 strikes involving a total of 220,700 workers, in 1925 these figures were down to 42 and 161,200 respectively and in 1926 still further to 31 and 127,800.¹

While this decline was observed in the mass struggle state bodies stepped up their repressive functions. The prevailing mood was one of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism that became particularly acute after the murder in Lausanne in 1923 of the Soviet diplomat Vorovsky.

The leaders of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland went in for collaborationist politics. In 1926, they put before parliament a proposal for arbitration as a means for resolving all "industrial conflicts" and for establishing "class peace".

The Communist Party of Switzerland that had been formed in 1921 made its main objective in the period of stabilisation of capitalism the establishment of a united front of the working people in the struggle against the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. This policy was formulated in the resolution passed at its 3rd Congress held in 1924.

After the division of *Ireland*, forced upon the country by the imperialists in 1921, the 26 counties which had been granted dominion status set up the Irish Free State. At the election to the new parliament in 1923 power was won by the party which had supported the 1921 treaty, Cumann na Gaedheal (Gaelic League). The government formed by the leader of that party William T. Cosgrave pursued policies against the interests of the people, which held back the country's development and led to intolerable hardships for the working people in both town and country. Laws were passed which drastically cut unemployment benefits and old-aged pensions, while demands from the working people for the establishment of a minimum wage were rejected out of hand.

This offensive by the bourgeoisie against the living standards of the working people met with stiff resistance from the workers. A factor which helped to consolidate the progressive forces in the labour movement was the return home from the USA of the popular workers' leader Jim Larkin on April 30, 1923. Larkin led a bold campaign against the anti-worker course being followed by the "national" government. On his initiative a trade union organisation was set up called the Workers' Union of Ireland and a proletarian political organisation called the Irish Labour League. Communist groups were among those affiliated to the latter. In 1928, the Labour League

¹ G. P. Dragunov, *Switzerland: Past and Present (An Outline of Recent History)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 47 (in Russian).

joined the Comintern. The Workers' Union of Ireland was to join the Red International of Labour Unions.

In 1924, railway workers, construction workers, dockers, municipal workers led by the Workers' Union of Ireland organised long strikes on a mass scale. The government refused to recognise the Workers' Union of Ireland. Demonstrations and rallies often turned into bloody clashes between workers, on the one hand, and police and soldiers, on the other.

Yet by using no other means than those of a purely economic struggle the workers were not able to stand up to the powerful economic and ideological-political pressure from the government and the reformist leadership of the Irish Trade Union Congress. In the second half of the 1920s, the workers' action became less intense and organised. Wide strata of the working people fell victim to disappointment and apathy. As a result of the conciliatory course the leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party had been following and their indifference to the struggle for national freedom, the number of trade union and Labour Party supporters fell in the period 1925-1926.

Yet this slump in the labour movement's activities did not in any way reflect a decline in the widespread dissatisfaction with Cosgrave's policies that were incompatible with the interests of the people. This discontent goes a long way towards explaining the success of propaganda by the new political party Fianna Fail (Soldiers of Destiny) which was supported by Republicans who had opposed the 1921 treaty. This party put forward a programme of measures designed to do away with the restrictions placed upon Ireland's national sovereignty and to put a stop to the country's economic dependence on Britain. Fianna Fail appealed to the people to build up a national homebased industry by using all national resources and the domestic market, with government support for these, and with the introduction of protective duties, immediate state subsidies for small farmers and abolition of the unjust system of land purchase rates.

The anti-imperialist slogans used by Fianna Fail, which supported national interests, and the demands for social reforms it put forward, were welcomed by the workers and farmers. In the 1927 election the Fianna Fail party was voted in Parliament.

THE MASS STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

In the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, the relative and far from durable nature of the stabilisation of capitalism stood out particularly clearly: the temporary stabilisation in this part of

the world had gone hand in hand with an exacerbation of capitalist contradictions. There were now even more urgent tasks connected with the democratisation of socio-economic and political relations and the conditions for a subsequent revolutionary transformation of society were riper than ever. The consequences of the violent way in which imperialist contradictions had been temporarily resolved during the first stage of the general crisis of capitalism had been disastrous for this part of Europe which, during the First World War, had been the scene of bitter, long fighting. It had proved particularly difficult to rehabilitate the economies of these countries after the war, since the agrarian and agro-industrial countries, which determined the socio-economic face of this part of Europe, had not time to make the most of those changes introduced in the period 1918-1923 in order to take a significant leap forward. Capitalism was underdeveloped almost everywhere in the region, the economies of these countries were held back by vestiges of feudalism and their socio-economic structure was unstable and far from homogeneous. Capitalist forms integrated into the former system which was stagnant, far from dynamic and in which there were still to be found many types of relations that impeded development. Because of the inconsistency and incomplete nature of the changes introduced earlier and also because of the restoration of former regimes, social relations in these countries presented a very confused picture. Social progress was very slow and the structure of society was being adapted exceedingly slowly to meet modern requirements.

The improvement of socio-economic relations was held back, on the one hand, by the retention of landed estates and traditional forms of coercion that only appeared capitalist on the surface, and on the other, by these countries' dependence on foreign capital which was not only plundering their economies, pumping out part of the surplus value, but also preventing the emergence of more developed forms of production, since foreign investors were only interested in cheap labour, in specialised agrarian products or raw materials of the region and stood to gain from keeping production there backward and one-sided. Apart from Czechoslovakia and Hungary where Austrian capital (and in the case of Slovakia Hungarian as well) had been replaced by local capital, foreign capital accounted everywhere for over a third of investment, and in a number of countries its share in the economy was equal to almost half the amount of local capital. The slow rate at which capitalism developed and the narrow specialisation of the internal market were responsible for the existence of several economic sectors, for greater disproportions in the economy and for smaller production efficiency. Despite the broadening range of the state's economic functions the rate of socio-economic development dropped in a number of countries. In most of these

countries even by the mid-1920s the pre-war levels of industrial and agricultural production had not been reached.

Food supplies did not get back to normal for a long time, and there was no rise in the living standards of the working people which had fallen so drastically during the war years and which had been low before that anyway. The ruling circles in the countries of this part of Europe tried to surmount economic difficulties mainly by plundering the working people more than ever, and by cruelly curtailing their social rights and political freedoms.

The fact that the introduction of bourgeois-democratic reforms in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe had been incomplete affected political relations in the region in the negative way.

Constant instability was inherent in the political system of most of the countries in the region: bourgeois parliamentarianism, bereft as it was of firm traditions, was rapidly nearing a crisis point. This applied to those countries which had retained or re-established a constitutional monarchy that had been in existence before the First World War (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia) and also to those in which republics had been newly set up. In a number of countries (Albania and Greece) the republic was soon replaced by a monarchy. It was only in Czechoslovakia that bourgeois-democratic institutions proved to be relatively stable. Almost everywhere a trend towards greater executive power was to be observed. The ruling classes tended towards reactionary and authoritarian methods of government.

Political tensions were exacerbated by conflicts between nationalities, since most of these new states or states with newly defined borders were not nationally homogeneous.

Since they were experiencing significant problems as they strove to achieve stability, the ruling classes resorted more and more to extending and entrenching the use of violent measures, leaning more and more heavily on the army. Previously the armies had been set up to provide a strike force of the counter-revolution. In the years that followed the First World War controversial questions were still being resolved by force of arms. Yet the underlying causes of the various conflicts were not so easily swept away. This led to an extension of martial law that had been introduced to combat left forces, to an increase in the army's influence and in the activities within the army of right-wing, revanchist and nationalistic groups, and to a more important role for the army in political life. In Romania, in particular, it was a very long time before martial law was lifted. This meant that in almost all countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe (except in those which had suffered defeat in the war) there existed large armies. Militarist groups, overt and covert military

organisations (such as Bulgaria's Military League, Serbia's White Hand, etc.) constituted highly influential pressure groups. Career officers and militarists, who had played a large part in crushing the revolutionary struggle of the masses, were being increasingly involved in their countries' internal affairs. In monarchist Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia there were close links between the army and the royal court. From 1919 the army was in control of state affairs in Hungary and during the 1920s in Poland.

The militarists played a decisive role in setting up authoritarian dictatorships. In addition to the ruthless regime of Miklos Horthy in Hungary, a military-authoritarian dictatorship was set up in Greece in 1925 under General Pangalos, and in 1926 another in Poland under Marshal Pilsudski. In Romania it was General Averescu who held sway, a man who had held the reins of government on several occasions and was leading Romania towards a similar type of dictatorship. Although General Gajda's putsch in Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1926 failed, the political position of the right-wing circles in the army gained ground there as well.

From the moment fascism emerged in Italy the right-wing military-authoritarian regimes and the reactionary politicians in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe drew their methods and tactics from the Italians' copy-book. The growth of fascist tendencies was to be felt everywhere. It was in Hungary that the state apparatus was first seen to assume a fascist appearance, although during the 1920s the process of transformation was as yet incomplete. Fascist methods of "sanation" were being used increasingly widely in Poland, as they were by the military-cum-monarchist regime in Yugoslavia, by the royal family and the Iron Guard in Romania. Fascist groups and organisations were being set up everywhere, although during the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism the fascist trends, as a rule, were not developing into mass movements. In some countries, such as Yugoslavia, fascist groups came into open conflict with the ruling quarters. The relatively early and rapid fascistisation of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe had resulted from the tense nature of the class battles of 1918-1923, from the extreme reactionary policies of the ruling alliance of the bourgeoisie and the landowners and from the sharp contradictions and constant tension of social relations in the period that followed, which did not bring any "lull" in the mass action of the workers, peasants and indeed of all democratic strata of society. This action reflected the combination, so typical for the region, of the growing potential of the revolutionary movement of the working class and that of the democratic sections of society resulting from the governments' failure to resolve the agrarian and national questions.

Yet there was still a large number of obstacles impeding the

bringing together of these currents of mass struggle. The working class in the region which had played such an active part in the democratic, national liberation revolutions of the earlier period, but had failed on account of factors outside its control to assume power,¹ was now in retreat. It was regrouping its forces so as to organise resistance to the capitalists' attack on living standards and on social legislation, and so as to oppose the rapid intensification of capitalist exploitation. This offensive of the reactionaries, the setting up of reactionary regimes which often resorted to shooting strikers and demonstrators, arrests and other cruel repressive measures, the stripping from working people of their political and social rights or the major curtailment of the latter made the working-class struggle far more difficult and impeded the organisation and development of the labour movement. Yet against this background a good deal of economic protest assumed a political character, and thus helped the masses to understand the need to struggle against the existing regimes. It was, however, by no means always possible to achieve this end, since the working class was weak and divided. The share of the working class in the overall population of this region remained comparatively small (with the exception of Czechoslovakia where 25 per cent of Czechs were of working-class origin and 15 per cent of the Slovaks). In Hungary, the working class made up 14 per cent of the population, and in Poland 13 per cent. In the agrarian countries this percentage was lower still: 8.7 per cent in Yugoslavia, and close on 8 per cent in Bulgaria and Romania. In most of the countries in question agricultural workers made up a large section of the proletariat.

The experience the social democratic leaders gleaned in the direct suppression of revolutionary action had a disastrous effect upon the social democratic parties of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, which constituted the right flank of the international social democratic movement. The policy of class collaboration pursued by these leaders was often followed by declarations of support for reactionary regimes. At the end of the period of partial stabilisation the majority of the social democratic parties had decided to oppose these regimes instead, yet not even this development encouraged these leaders to abandon their anti-communist course, which had proved a major obstacle in the drive to achieve united working-class action. Almost everywhere the Communists were obliged to work underground and were to use the very limited means at their disposal to draw support from legal organisations, to combat anti-communist sentiments and to hold back the growth of the labour

¹ *The International Working-Class Movement. Problems of History and Theory*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1985, p. 189, 190.

and democratic movements. The communist parties' activity was also complicated by the fact that the peasants were infested with anti-proletarian, agrarian moods, that the concept of "class solidarity" was foisted upon them by the authoritarian regimes. This concept that implied "harmonious resolution" of all and any differences and contradictions on the basis of national unity, was invoked so as to hold back the growth of the proletariat's class consciousness.

Against this background of tense ideological struggle, the communist parties in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe were defining their objectives and their course of struggle, charting out their tactics for the fight against fascism and authoritarian regimes run on military lines. At the same time they were defending as staunchly as possible the everyday requirements of the working people.

* * *

In *Poland* an economic crisis had set in late 1923: there had been a rapid drop in production, a number of factories were standing idle, and unemployment was on the increase. This unfavourable situation lasted until the middle of 1926. The political life of the country in this period was overshadowed by a mounting crisis of parliamentary democracy: the democratisation of the social system was inconsistent and the constitution of 1921 had not been put properly into effect.

The ruling classes who had endeavoured to make the working people bear the brunt of the burden stemming from the stabilisation of capitalism, now embraced an openly anti-proletarian policy which led, among other things, to suppression of national minorities constituting a third of the Polish population. Between 1924 and 1928 the forces of reaction were carrying out a mass-scale offensive against the hard-won gains of the working people. In January 1924 the government gave its authorisation for a longer working day for certain sections of the proletariat, and in the summer of 1924 for an introduction of a ten-hour working day in the mining and metal industries of Silesia. Wages for workers in these branches were cut at the same time.

These actions of the government and the capitalists gave rise to determined resistance of the working people. In the first year of capitalist stabilisation the working class maintained a fairly high level of strike action: in 1924 over half a million working people were involved in industrial disputes.¹

¹ *Historia polskiego ruchu robotniczego, 1864-1964*, Vol. 1, Warsaw, 1967, pp. 350-51; *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego, Kronika wydarzeń*, Warsaw, 1978, p. 115.

The largest strikes, which resulted in a retention of wages at their former level thanks to the joint efforts of Communists and Socialists, were those of the eleven thousand oil workers from Borisov, Stanisławów and Krosno, and also the strike of 120,000 textile workers from Łódź and the surrounding district which was supported by a general strike of other Łódź workers. The strikers obtained the introduction of laws providing for insurance against accidents, for unemployment benefits and for adequate labour protection for women and minors.

The strike movement came up against fierce opposition from the government which had tried to limit, even ban strikes altogether, replacing them by compulsory forms of arbitration. The government enjoyed the support of the collaborationist leaders of the socialist and Christian trade unions, whose splitting tactics contributed greatly to the failure of the striking miners and metal-workers' demands being met.

In the forefront of the mass struggle marched the Communist Labour Party of Poland (KPRP), which in 1925 was renamed the Communist Party of Poland (KPP). The Communists, who had been ousted from most trade unions after these had been amalgamated, continued their work among the masses concentrating their activities in action committees, factory councils and unemployment committees, and striving to bring them together to take the lead in the strike movement.

The urgent tasks to be tackled in the class struggle of the proletariat were formulated in the resolution drawn up by the KPRP Central Committee in July 1924. The Communists demanded the retention of the eight-hour working day and existing wage levels, the setting up of factory committees to supervise production and the utilisation of state credits, the sequestration and re-opening of the closed down factories under the supervision of workers' organisations, the provision of work and unemployment benefits, etc. The First Congress of Factory Councils, convened on the initiative of the Communists, which set up a Central Action Committee (the Committee of 21), and later the second such congress called for the united action by all working people to defend their social and political rights. Yet attempts by the Committee of 21 to convene a workers' congress on a nation-wide scale were thwarted by the Socialists, and the members of the Committee were arrested. In September 1924, again on the initiative of the Communists, a Congress of the unemployed from Upper Silesia was held, which elected a Central Committee for the Unemployed. This Committee organised a march of ten thousand unemployed in Katowice on October 14, to put their demands to the provincial authorities.¹

¹ 100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego, p. 114.

Although the Communist Party was endeavouring to set up a united working-class front, it did not succeed in healing the differences within the working class because of opposition from the right-wing leadership of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), which had adopted an anti-communist stand. In August 1924 during a workers' rally Wiktor Byaly, a member of the Warsaw Committee of KPRP, was killed by a militant PPS group. Furthermore, widely differing assessments of the then current situation constituted a major obstacle to united action by Communists and Socialists: the KPRP which had not yet realised that the stabilisation of capitalism had begun was still starting out from the assumption that socialist revolution was imminent, while the PPS exaggerated the extent of this stabilisation, regarding it as a transitional stage between capitalism and socialism.¹

In the autumn of 1925 the leaders of the PPS decided to enter the government and that aroused a wave of discontent among the workers. The influence of the PPS and the reformist trade unions was thus weakened. In 1925 the membership of the Trade Associations Union led by the Socialists fell by a third. Workers began to leave the PPS and by 1931 its membership had halved.²

Increasingly frequent defeats for strikers and growing unemployment led to a lull in the strike movement. In 1925 the number of workers coming out on strike dropped to 149,000.³

Despite all this the bourgeoisie did not succeed in breaking the fighting spirit of the Polish proletariat. In 1925 more than half the strikes ended in victory for the workers. One of the most impressive strikes was that of the Warsaw metal-workers organised by the Communists. The trade union led by the Socialists also took part. After a resolute struggle, lasting nearly a month, the strike ended in the conclusion of a collective agreement on conditions advantageous to the working people. In December a wave of mass demonstrations by the unemployed swept the country.

Non-proletarian strata of the working people, and the national minorities were also becoming more active. The desperate shortage of land, the government's sabotage of the agrarian reform, heavy taxation and inflation all served to fan discontent among the peasantry. In the spring of 1924 in the *powiats* (districts) of Kolno and Ostrolęka bloody clashes took place between the peasants and the police.⁴

¹ C. Kozłowski, *Z dziejów polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, Warsaw, 1975, pp. 165, 170-71.

² *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, p. 118.

³ J. Kowalski, *Zarys historii polskiego ruchu robotniczego w latach 1918-1939*, Warsaw, 1959.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Peasant political parties and organisations were stepping up their activities, an Independent Peasants' Party was formed (NPC) led by A. Fiderkiewicz and S. Wojewódzki, which began to work together with the Communists, putting forward slogans calling for a workers' and peasants' government, for the division of the landowners' estates without redemption payments, for the nationalisation of the country's forests, full rights for the Byelorussian and Ukrainian minorities, for free education, etc.¹ In June 1925 a bill for the implementation of agrarian reform without redemption payments was put before the Sejm by the communist fraction, the NPC deputies and the Byelorussian alliance Hromada.

The Byelorussian peasants' and workers' alliance Hromada which emerged at that time was a major Byelorussian party. In its capacity as one of the most active left-wing organisations representing a national minority, it cooperated with the KPP. Its programme included revolutionary transformation of the existing social order, division of the landowners' estates without redemption payments, self-determination for Byelorussian lands and their reunion with Soviet Byelorussia. The communist parties of Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine were also stepping up their activity. The struggle of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian working people, assuming an ever wider scale, found expression in opposition to the collection of taxes, in the boycotting of representatives from the central authorities and even in partisan tactics. A special punitive "frontier guard corps" was set up to subdue the Byelorussian and Ukrainian villages.

The 4th Conference of the KPP (late 1925) devoted special attention to the need for consolidating links between the Party and the broad masses, for the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, including the middle peasants, and for cooperation with the national liberation movement of the national minorities—Byelorussians and Ukrainians—who were demanding reunion with the Soviet Republics. The Party's leaders included Adolf Warski, Julian Lenski, Edward Próchniak and Aleksander Danieluk.

While the class struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry continued at this intense level and the national liberation movement was gaining ground the government increasingly resorted to repressive measures—banning trade unions, mass arrests of Communists and left-wing political figures, etc. With each passing day it became clearer that the ruling clique was unable to ensure any kind of firm economic and political stabilisation in the country. The situation was growing more and more tense, constant changes of

¹ B. Dymek, *Niezależna Partia Chlopska. 1924-1927*, Warsaw, 1972.

government bore witness to the ever more critical condition of the parliamentary system.

In May 1926 Marshal Pilsudski engineered a coup d'état. Together with his followers, who prior to that had constituted a militarist extra-parliamentary and non-party pressure group, he wrested from the traditional bourgeois political parties the representation of the interests of the Polish propertied classes and began to make wide use of the army as a major factor in the stabilisation of the country with recourse to violent means. Declaring as essential the "purging" ("sanation") of the country from the "pollution of dirty political intrigue, and from thieves and scoundrels",¹ Pilsudski proceeded to set up a dictatorial, authoritarian regime run on military lines, which paved the way for the general fascistisation of the country.

Initially Pilsudski's demagogic declarations served to mislead wide strata of the population, including the working people. The Socialists gave their unconditional support to the coup.² The KPP saw in Pilsudski the representative of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, and his assumption of power as a degree of progress towards the democratisation of the country. Yet as early as June 1926 a plenary meeting of the Central Committee amended the erroneous assessment of the new regime drawn up in May, calling upon the masses to fight for the overthrow of the dictatorship and its "purge of the nation" and for the setting up of a workers' and peasants' government.

Despite constant attacks and harassment the communist fraction in parliament, the NPC, the Byelorussian Hromada alliance, the Ukrainian Sel-Sojuz (Rural Union) and Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) groups, that amalgamated in October 1926 to form Sel-Rob, constituted a united front within the Sejm, putting into practice the idea of a campaign to achieve a workers' and peasants' alliance: this front campaigned to unite democratic forces in the struggle against the Pilsudski regime and in defence of the rights of the working people and the national minorities.

The true face of the Pilsudski regime soon made itself clear through its ever closer collaboration with finance and industrial capital, through its support for capitalist rationalisation at the expense of the workers, and for the still harsher terms of compulsory state arbitration forced upon them. The regime of "sanation" made frequent recourse to repressive measures. Workers' meetings were banned, their publications were confiscated and rallies and demonstrations were broken up. The Byelorussian Hromada alliance was disbanded. Thousands

¹ A. Darlicki, *Przewrót Majowy*, Warsaw, 1971, pp. 193, 290, 320, 322.

² A. Tymieniecka, *Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w latach 1924-1929*, Warsaw, 1969, p. 192.

of Communists and activists from other progressive organisations were thrown into prison.

Stronger anti-communist action was now being taken by the right-wing leaders of the PPS and there was a stepping-up of terrorist activities by militant groups of right-wing Socialists.

Within the socialist movement various differences were now emerging: in June 1926 the left opposition in the PPS and the trade unions broke off to form an independent party, PPS-Lewica, which was prepared to work with the Communists. Its programme provided for a campaign to rebuild society along socialist lines, to nationalise industry and to implement agrarian reform without redemption payments.

At the end of 1926 the leadership of the PPS decided to start opposing the Pilsudski regime. In the year that followed the right-wing Socialists formed a pro-"sanation" party—the so-called PPS—a former revolutionary faction. The 21st PPS Congress (November 1928) came out in favour of stronger ties with the left forces among the peasantry and with the Socialists from among the national minorities although at the same time it passed a resolution calling for stronger action against the KPP.

The improvement of the economic situation after 1926, the reduction in unemployment and the small increase in wages only led to a temporary lull in the strike movement. In 1927 the workers again began to launch a counter-offensive: the number of revolutionary trade unions grew; there was a rise in the level of working-class militancy; the protest campaign against repression gained ground, as did that calling for an amnesty for political prisoners. The high point in the strike movement that year was the strike in March of 150,000 textile workers from Łódź which secured some increase in wages despite serious clashes with the police.

In 1928 the number of strikers reached 354,000, and three quarters of the strikes ended in victory.¹ Again the largest and most resolute of these was the three-week-long strike of 100,000 Łódź textile workers in which the Communists played a leading role. The striking workers organised large street marches, rallies and mass-meetings, put forward anti-war slogans and called for friendship and cooperation with the Soviet people. The meeting of factory delegates adopted a resolution to turn to the international proletariat for material support, and first and foremost to the working class of the USSR. Funds came in; however, the right-wing Socialists, the leaders of the trade union, refused to accept the help offered. It was only during the final stage of the strike that the left trade union opposition succeeded

¹ J. Kowalski, op. cit.; *Historia polskiego ruchu robotniczego, 1864-1964*, Vol. 1, p. 394.

in transmitting these funds to the workers. The general strike in sympathy with the textile workers that was being prepared by the Communists was called off by collaborationists.

Thanks to their consistent policy of opposition to the Pilsudski regime directed against the people, the Communists were winning more and more support from the masses. In July 1927 the Communists, despite ever more ingenious methods of harassment to which they were now being subjected, scored victories in Czeladź in the municipal elections and for several months succeeded in holding on to this power-base.¹ In March 1928 in Warsaw and the Dąbrowa basin the Communists succeeded in gaining more votes than any other of the workers' parties in the elections to the Sejm. The authorities were not prepared to accept this. During the opening of the Sejm the police arrested the communist deputies: subsequently on a number of occasions the Sejm adopted several resolutions to the effect that the members of the communist faction should be sent for trial.

After the elections of 1928 to the Sejm an alliance was formed of the PPS and the two peasants' parties—the PSL—"Wyzwolenie" and the Stronnictwa Chłopskiego. This resulted in the opposition to the Pilsudski regime becoming stronger than ever. The KPP did not join the left parliamentary opposition.² During the period 1924 to 1928 social conflict showed no real sign of abating, rather it was conducive to the next outbreak of the class struggle in the 1930s.

Both economically and politically *Czechoslovakia* presented a picture that was very different from that found in the majority of the states in Central and South-Eastern Europe. This country with a high degree of industrial development had a working class over three-million strong which was the largest single class in society. The working people of Czechoslovakia, where a bourgeois-democratic system had taken root, enjoyed a number of democratic rights that had been secured in 1918-1923—the years of intense revolutionary activity. In this country there existed and operated legally political, trade union and other mass organisations of the working people.

In 1925 industrial production in Czechoslovakia was more or less at the pre-war level. The growth in production was accompanied by minor improvements in the economic position of the popular masses.³ In 1924 a law was passed in parliament providing for social insurance. The ruling circles who had made a few concessions to the working people were making every effort to spread among the masses the concepts of national unity and the harmony of class interests. Yet under cover of phrases about "class harmony" the bourgeoisie was drastical-

¹ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, pp. 122-23.

² C. Kozłowski, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

³ *Přehled hospodářského vývoje Československa v letech 1918-1945*, Prague, 1961, pp. 273, 285.

ly intensifying its exploitation of the working people. Certain improvements in nominal wages were recuperated many times over through monstrous intensification of labour which in the Bata shoe factories, for example, drove workers to the limits of their physical strength.

The Czech bourgeoisie which had assumed the predominant position in the country was holding back the development of industry in Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine, turning these territories into nothing but sources of agricultural produce and raw materials for their own industrially developed part of the country. The standard of living for the popular masses in Slovakia and Transcarpathian Ukraine was considerably lower than that enjoyed by the Czechs. Yet at the same time the Czech bourgeoisie attempted to incite the Czechs and the Slovaks against the remaining national minorities which constituted over a third of the country's population. The nationalist policies of the Czech bourgeoisie served to exacerbate contradictions between the minorities in the country. A particularly important political problem was that presented by the German community, especially in the northern and north-western parts of Czech territory. The inability of the ruling circles to resolve the national question in a democratic spirit served to undermine the very foundations of this bourgeois-democratic republic.

Czechoslovakia's working class had attained a high level of trade union organisation: 40-45 per cent of all industrial and white-collar workers were unionised. Yet the effectiveness of this union strength was weakened by the split within the movement. There were between 12 and 15 trade union centres in the country, which had affiliations with various political parties. The largest of these was the Association of Czechoslovakian Trade Unions which had joined the Amsterdam International and adhered to the ideas propagated by right-wing Social Democrats. It numbered close on 350,000 members. The revolutionary unions came together in the International General Trade Union which had over 200,000 members in 1924 and was affiliated to Profintern.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) enjoyed considerable authority among working people. The Communists played a crucial role in organising the mass struggle of the working people and leading that struggle. After achieving the creation of a united workers' front, the Communists encouraged a campaign to set up factory committees and turn these into front-line bases for the class struggle. In the autumn of 1924 the First National Congress of Factory Committees and Factory Councils was held in Prague. The Congress called upon the workers to join forces for the struggle against rising prices, deteriorating working conditions, reduced wages and to campaign for the rights of these bodies representing workers' interests in the factories.

In 1924 the working class was engaged above all in economic battles. Strikes were organised in many branches of industry. In comparison with 1923 the number of strikes was still rising although the number of actual participants was less than half. Only an eighth of the strikes that were launched ended in victory for the workers. In 1925 the strike movement acquired a new lease of life. Workers were demanding higher wages and the conclusion of collective agreements, and in a number of cases they even demanded that workers should be inspecting production. On February 10, 1925 a demonstration of workers in Prague ended in a clash with the police, in the course of which six of the demonstrators were seriously wounded. The biggest strike was that led by the KSC involving 50,000 workers in Ostrava, which as a result of the authorities' terror tactics and the splitting policy of the reformists ended in defeat.¹ In 1926 the growth of the strike movement levelled off in connection with an economic crisis affecting some industries and with an increase in unemployment. The number of strikers and that of strikes were less than half the figures for the previous year. Only four per cent of the strikes were successful. In the period that followed the strike movement began to grow again, went on to the offensive and became truly resolute once more: in fact at times whole industrial areas were strike-bound.²

The main organisers behind the mass struggle of the working people were the Communists, whose selfless defence of the interests of the masses led to a steady rise in the party's influence. At the parliamentary elections in November 1925 the KSC won 934,000 votes, which put it into second place as to the number of voters. The Social Democratic Workers' Party of Czechoslovakia won 631,000 votes, the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany won 411,000 votes.³

Yet, so that the revolutionary forces might continue their successful action it was essential to unite the working class, to bring it into a firm alliance with the peasantry and all democratic sections within society. So as to achieve this end the Communists had to oppose not only the splitting tactics employed by the bourgeoisie, but also the splitting tactics pursued within the labour and the democratic movements themselves by, in particular, the leadership of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Czechoslovakia. The social democratic leaders who had actively cooperated with the bourgeois parties were irreconcilably anti-communist and went out of their way to rend close ties between workers and the country's other democratic forces.

¹ I. N. Melnikova, *The Class Struggle in Czechoslovakia between 1924-1929*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 166-70 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 308.

³ *Příruční Slovník k dějinám KSČ*, Vol. 2, Prague, 1964, p. 964.

While leading the class struggle of the proletariat the Communist Party gleaned the experience necessary to enable it to consolidate its position from both the ideological and organisational angle. An important stage in the development of the Party was its 2nd Congress held in October-November 1924. The Congress exhorted party members to spread communist influence in the factories and to set up party organisations there. A Central Committee of the KSČ was formed, which included representatives of the former leadership and the left wing, the nucleus of which was provided by a new generation of proletarian revolutionaries—such as Klement Gottwald, Jan Šverma and Jan Harus. The Congress stressed the need to establish an alliance of the working class and the working peasantry and tirelessly to defend their everyday demands and interests. The Congress condemned the concept of the so-called “single Czechoslovakian nation” and put forward a slogan stressing the rights of nations to self-determination. The Congress also pointed out that the KSČ would have to cover a long path of ideological, political and organisational consolidation in order to become a genuine party of a new type.¹

The Party's line met with determined resistance from the opportunists who were against promoting mass struggle and who had set up an anti-party faction with the aim of splitting the KSČ. When the Politburo of the KSČ's Central Committee adopted a resolution to expel the chairman of the Prague district committee, J. Bubnik, for anti-party activities, a number of district committees, which had an opportunist majority, from Brno and Kladno, to name but two, came out against the party leadership. The Party was now caught up in a serious crisis.

The course followed by the right wing was expounded in the so-called Brno Memorandum which denied the need for democratic centralism and reorganisation of the Party according to the production principle; it also called for the Party leaders to be changed. The opportunists maintained that when the stabilisation of capitalism was setting in the course of promoting mass struggle should be abandoned and the KSČ should instead confine itself mainly to work within parliament.

The 5th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee held in March-April 1925 played a major part in resolving the inner-party crisis of the KSČ. The Plenary Meeting supported the leadership of the KSČ in its struggle against the right-wing opportunists and helped it consolidate its ranks. After stressing the need to oppose the threat from the right-wing opportunists as the

¹ *A Short History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, Moscow, 1979, p. 130 (in Russian).

most serious threat of all, the Plenary Meeting of the CEC reiterated that the strengthening of the Party's position was inextricably bound up with the promotion of the broad-scale mass struggle.

Yet the ideological, political and organisational consolidation of the Party was impeded by other serious problems at a later date.

In the late 1920s the dominant grouping within the KSČ leadership was that led by Jilek-Bolen, which, while using left-wing slogans, was infecting the Party's ranks with a spirit of complacency, passivity, formalism and unimaginative routine, thereby undermining the political activity of the Communists. Serious errors were made in trying to secure a united workers' front: occasionally the leaders of the red trade unions confined themselves to doing no more than talking to the reformist union leaders and disregarded the importance of crucial first-hand contact with the masses.

A counter-balance to Jilek-Bolen's group was provided by the increasingly influential Marxist-Leninist core in the Party, led by Klement Gottwald. In July 1928 at a meeting of the KSČ Central Committee Gottwald and his supporters subjected the opportunist errors perpetrated by the party leadership to well substantiated criticism. The Marxist-Leninist core within the Party demanded that a resolute struggle be waged against right-wing opportunism in order to free the Party once and for all from the last traces of social democratic practices.

The problems in the Czechoslovakian Party was discussed by a special commission of the Comintern Executive Committee at the 6th Comintern Congress. The commission's findings were made public in an open letter from the CEC to the membership of the KSČ in which the CEC expressed its support for the Party's Marxist-Leninist core.

The 5th Congress of the KSČ played an important part in the struggle to consolidate the Party's revolutionary stand. This Congress, held between February 18 and 23, 1929, marked a turning point in the reorganisation of the KSČ as a party of the Leninist type. The Congress elaborated a revolutionary programme aimed at involving the majority of the working people in the fight against capitalism, at winning the masses' firm support for the Communist Party, and at injecting new life into the movement against the threat of war and in support of the USSR. The KSČ Central Committee was now led by Klement Gottwald.

In *Bulgaria*, after the September Uprising of 1923 had been suppressed, a blatantly terrorist dictatorship was established. The reactionaries' offensive took the form of direct terror—political terror, repressive measures against democratic organisations, the introduction of emergency legislation and curtailment of the rights of representative institutions.

In January 1924, the so-called Law for Defence of the State was passed, on the basis of which the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and the Labour Party set up only shortly before with the former's assistance, the Young Communist League, and the workers' cooperative Osvobozhdenie (Liberation) were all banned. In March 1925, the Law for Defence of the State was amended, providing for even harsher repressive measures against revolutionary activities. Thousands of Communists perished in the wake of police terror, as did prominent figures in the left trade union movement and other anti-fascists.

Infringements against the people's political rights went hand in hand with an all-out attack by the big capitalists on the vital interests of the working people. After the ruthless suppression of the September Uprising of 1923 the material condition of the Bulgarian working class deteriorated considerably: wages for the bulk of the workers dropped by 20 to 30 per cent, the working day was lengthened to as much as 10-14 hours and the numbers of unemployed grew.

The September Uprising made it unmistakably clear that the regime was unstable and insecure. Cruel repression had only served to widen the gulf between the fascist rulers and the popular masses. In their efforts to consolidate the social base of the regime, the ruling circles opted to replace, at the beginning of 1926, the Tsankov government, that had compromised itself, with one led by Lyapchev, which, although not different in any of its essential characteristics, did however curb the scale of repression a little.

The change in the balance of class forces in favour of the reactionaries and the temporary ebb of the revolutionary movement made it imperative for the working class to adopt new forms of struggle and to work on replenishing their ranks and enhancing their influence in the masses, as they prepared them for future class battles. In that period ultra-left elements exerted a major influence in the leadership of the BCP and in particular in the Party's Military Centre. These elements underestimated the importance of organised mass struggle and were pursuing what was by that time an out-dated course, namely that of an armed uprising, and encouraging a partisan movement. Despite warnings from the BCP Central Committee's Foreign Bureau terrorist acts against the authorities became more and more frequent, which in their turn provided excuses for increasingly ruthless fascist terror.

The BCP was however still the leading force behind the struggle against reaction. After surmounting various obstacles and putting right sectarian mistakes, the Party proceeded to elaborate a policy aimed at uniting and consolidating the democratic forces of the country, and upholding the vital interests of the workers and peas-

ants. Resolutions adopted at the Moscow (July-September 1925) and Vienna (September 1926) conferences of the BCP Central Committee constituted an important contribution towards overcoming mistakes perpetrated by the ultra-left. After the Communist Party had turned its back on the former plans for an armed uprising, it concentrated its efforts on consolidating the links between the working class and the masses at large.

Despite constant pressure from the fascist government, the democratic forces in Bulgaria succeeded to restore to their former strength certain of their organisations. In 1927 a legal Workers' Party was formed which supported class struggle and proletarian internationalism and provided a legal outlet for the BCP's activity. It began to put out a legal newspaper *Rabotnichesko Dyelo* (The Workers' Cause) and then in 1928 the Workers' Youth League was also formed.

In July 1925 the BCP's Central Committee decided to reconstitute a mass-scale revolutionary trade union. In the months that followed a number of branch organisations for this trade union were formed—for print workers, bakers, cooks, waiters, etc. Using these as a spring-board in October 1925 the Independent Workers' Federation of Bulgaria was set up, and the national conference convened in August 1926 then decided to rename the federation the Independent Workers' Trade Unions (IWTU). In August 1925 the IWTU's legal newspaper *Unity* began to appear. In 1925 the IWTU sent its own unofficial representative to the Central Council of Profintern. Through Profintern the IWTU maintained close links with the USSR Central Council of Trade Unions.

The BCP sent its prominent figures to carry out a supervisory role in this work with the unions: Ivanov, Khalachev, Stoyanov, Milev and others. From 1927 to 1933 Asen Boyadzhiev was responsible for trade union work in the BCP's Central Committee and worked as the IWTU secretary.

Despite its relatively small numbers (in early November 1927 it only had 7,000 members)¹ the IWTU exerted considerable influence within the Bulgarian working class. It was an important legal channel between the Communist Party and the working masses. Workers' mass meetings were organised under the leadership of the IWTU, it sent special delegations, petitions and appeals to parliament and government institutions to convey workers' protests against the arbitrary behaviour of employers, against illegal requisitions, violence and oppression and to demand that the country's social and political structure be made more democratic.

¹ История на профсъюзното движение в България, София, 1973, стр. 341-42.

After 1926 the strike movement gradually became more active. The strike movement developed on a particularly broad scale in the tobacco and textile industries. In May and June 1927 workers demanded higher wages, a shorter working day and improved working conditions. The strikers obtained partial satisfaction of their demands. This mass action by Bulgarian workers under the guidance of the BCP and the IWTU pointed to the beginning of a counter-offensive by the working people.¹

In the years that followed the struggle continued to gain ground. In May 1929 successful strikes were staged by 27,000 workers in Khaskovo, Stanimaka (Asenovgrad), Kurdzhali, Plovdiv and other centres of the tobacco industry. Workers from the textile and footwear industries of Sliven joined the fight at about the same time.

The leadership of the IWTU made every effort to achieve working-class unity in the trade unions. The IWTU representatives started negotiations with the leadership of the reformist Free League of Trade Unions in pursuit of this end. In July 1926 at a joint workers' meeting of representatives of both organisations a common programme of action was passed. The trade unions declared that, while being independent of political parties from the organisational point of view, they at the same time considered it necessary for the proletariat to organise politically and supported the idea of class struggle. The united trade unions declared in the same programme document that it was their aim to defend the interests of the working class through class struggle and the elimination of wage slavery. They were resolved to fight for international solidarity of the workers and for international trade union unity.² However, this agreement, achieved with regard to the formation of a united General Workers' Trade Union was frustrated by the leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the Amsterdam International which together forced the Free League of Trade Unions to abandon the agreement.

During the period of the partial and temporary stabilisation of capitalism the struggle to unite workers, peasants and other strata of the working people in joint opposition to the arbitrary sway of the capitalists, reactionaries and fascists gained ground under the leadership of the BCP and the legal Workers' Party. In a specially prepared political document of the Labour Alliance, that was to provide the organisational framework for the united front involving all strata of the working population, demands were put forward for the restoration of civil and political rights, for a full and unconditional amnesty for political prisoners, for an end to harassment of the working people's class-based associations, for the guarantee of freedom of

¹ *История на Българската комунистическа партия*, София, 1979, стр. 308-09.

² Г. Димитров, *Съчинения*, т. 8, София, 1953, стр. 251-52.

speech, the press and association, the abolition of the fascist regime, for the protection of the working class and small producers from exploitation by predatory capitalists and money-lenders, for lower taxes, improved wages, the strict observation of labour legislation, for aid to the unemployed, etc. This document also contained slogans calling for peace, and the establishment of friendly relations with the Soviet Union.¹

The Central Committee of the Workers' Party turned to the bodies in charge of the Farming Union, the Social Democratic Party, and the Party of Artisans with a proposal for joint action. When this proposal was turned down the Labour Alliance began to build up its ranks from below involving rank-and-file members of the above-mentioned parties. The Labour Alliance committees which spread particularly rapidly during the campaigns leading up to the municipal and parliamentary elections of 1927 and 1928 represented a serious step forward in the formation of a united front.²

The BCP regarded relations with the USSR as a crucial issue and organised a far-reaching campaign for solidarity with the Soviet people, actively propagating the Soviet Union's experience of socialist construction and its peace-loving policies.

The movement in support of sending a delegation of workers and peasants to the Soviet Union to gain first-hand experience of the achievements of the Soviet people in economic and cultural development and in support of establishing diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union played an important role in the political activation of the masses in 1927 in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. On October 21, 1927 on the initiative of the BCP a conference was convened which elected a special committee. The movement was supported by the masses. The BCP used it in order to expose the slander spread abroad by the bourgeois propaganda machine with regard to the first socialist state of workers and peasants. However, the departure of the delegation was banned by the Lyapchev government. Other pointers to increased activity on the part of the labour and democratic movements in the country were provided by the Mayday demonstrations in Sofia in 1928 and 1929, involving over 15,000 people. Lyapchev's government did not succeed in holding back the development of the mass movement of workers, peasants and all democratic forces opposing the hated fascist regime.

In *Hungary* capitalist stabilisation proceeded at a time when the reactionary Horthy regime held sway in the country. The authorities were banning strikes and demonstrations, stepping up repressive

¹ *История на Българската комунистическа партия*, стр. 307.

² V. Bonev, *On a United, Popular and Patriotic Front in Bulgaria*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 108-17 (in Russian).

measures against Communists and Young Communist League members, organising mass trials against patriots opposing the reactionary system, and harassing the opposition press. In 1925 the Horthy authorities arrested four leading figures from the Communist Party of Hungary (CPH)—I. Gögös, M. Rakosi K. Öry and K. Hámán, and Z. Vas, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Young Workers, sending them to be tried by court-martial. The threat of execution hung over them all, but a powerful campaign of proletarian protest in sympathy with these men that was sparked off in the country and in all Europe served to stay the execution.

At the same time the ruling circles were going out of their way to encourage the activities of the various nationalist and openly fascist terrorist organisations.

It took Hungary a very long time to pull itself out of the post-war crisis. Even during the period of the temporary stabilisation of capitalism its economy did not acquire a stable foundation. With the help of foreign loans, which resulted in virtual economic and political enslavement,¹ increased exploitation of the working people, direct robbery of the workers, large sections of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, the ruling classes of Hungary succeeded partially in stabilising the financial system and improving the situation in both industry and agriculture.

The ruling classes persevered in their efforts to instil nationalistic and chauvinistic ideas into the people's minds so as to spread the illusion that the "shared", "national" interests of all Hungarians took precedence over class interests and contradictions. In the inter-war years the nationalist obsession fired the imagination not only of many members of the ruling classes, those of sections of the urban and rural bourgeoisie, but also of no small section of the working people.

In conditions of underground the Hungarian Communists prepared to reconstitute the Communist Party. Hungarian Communists living in exile worked hard to promote this cause: the main cells of these émigrés were in the USSR and Austria. In August 1925 the 1st Congress of the Communist Party of Hungary was held in Vienna which gave support to the rebuilding of the Party as the militant vanguard of the country's revolutionary forces. The Congress passed resolutions urging Communists to fight for the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary regime and for the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. The CPH saw as its main aim the establish-

¹ According to estimates drawn up by the Hungarian economist György Maros in the period 1924-1931 Hungary paid foreign monopolies 1,623 million pengé in the form of interest and dividends which was the equivalent of 55.7 per cent of the loans and credits received from abroad. (G. Maros, "The Role of the Western Imperialist Powers in Consolidating the Horthy Regime", *Congress of Hungarian Historians*, Vol. 2, Budapest, 1953, p. 238—in Hungarian.)

ment of a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat in close alliance with the poor peasantry.¹

The fact that the main strategic aim of the Party had not changed meant that the Congress had failed to take into account one important fact: after the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 and the establishment of the counter-revolutionary regime the situation had changed radically and now the most urgent task was to effect a democratic revolution, as the successful implementation of this step would accelerate the fight for socialist revolution as well. Yet while retaining the slogan of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat as its main strategic aim, with regard to immediate tactics the Party stressed first and foremost objectives of a general democratic struggle. The Congress called upon party members to wage a struggle for universal suffrage, for a democratic republic, for land reform and for owners of large properties to be made subject to taxation.²

This made it possible for the Party to consolidate its influence among the people, to expand the fight for the implementation of the demands supported by broad sections of the working people. Bearing in mind the lessons to be drawn from the experience of the Hungarian Soviet Republic the CPH campaigned for the expropriation of large landed estates without redemption payments and for the division of the land among the peasants at no cost to them. The party saw it as expedient to fight for the partial satisfaction of demands from proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in the villages and thus help to win them over to the cause of revolutionary struggle. In a resolution passed by the Congress about the Party's attitude to trade unions it was pointed out that despite the corruption to be found among trade union bureaucrats, their policies and tactics that sometimes went against the workers' interests, "never, not for a moment, should the trade unions be regarded as anti-worker organisations that cannot be used to further the revolutionary cause".³ The Congress came out in favour of Communists' participation in the work of trade unions.

The Congress adopted the Party's Charter that was based on Leninist principles of party building, elected a Central Committee that included Béla Kun, Jenő Landler, I. Gögös, Kató Hámán and others. During the Congress the first issues of the Party's theoretical journal *Uj Marcius* (New March) were published. The material published in the journal that was printed in Vienna and then smuggled

¹ *Dokumentumok a magyar forradalmi munkásmozgalom történetéből 1919-1929* (referred to henceforth as DMFMT 1919-1929), Budapest, 1964, p. 278.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 270-79.

³ *History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Labour Movement* (referred to henceforth as *HHRLM*), Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 79 (in Russian).

back into Hungary served to propagate revolutionary ideas among the Hungarians.

The CPH sought to use both legal and illegal methods of struggle in its activities. Besides the Communists bore in mind the growing dissatisfaction of Left Social Democrats with the collaborationist policies of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH).

At the trade union conference held in March 1924 and the 22nd Congress of the SDPH (April 1924) the Left opposition openly came against the social democratic leadership. Representatives of the left wing of the Party, whose guiding principles were outlined by István Vági at the 22nd Congress, subjected the reformist leadership to harsh criticism for forgetting the interests of the working class and for grovelling before the authorities of the Horthy regime. The Left opposition demanded that the party leadership abandon such policies and steer the Party towards the course of class struggle and active defence of the working people's interests. In response to this criticism the leadership of the SDPH resorted to repressive measures. This development made part of the Left opposition led by István Vági leave the Party and look for ways of setting up an organisation which would really fight for the cause of the working class.

In April 1925 a legal workers' party known as the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSM) was set up after agreement had been reached between the Communists and those left Social Democrats who had resigned from the SDPH and the trade unions. Without reference to any struggle for state power the MSM programme specified the tasks involved in the fight for democratic rights: the right of association and assembly, universal suffrage and secret ballot. The SWPH demanded a general political amnesty, freedom for the CPH to operate, a guarantee of state aid to the unemployed, a rise in real wages, legislation to fix the eight-hour working day and to ensure proper working conditions for women and minors, the introduction of a progressive tax on property and democratic land reform.¹ István Vági was elected as the first secretary of the MSM Central Committee, while at the same time officiating as a member of the CPH Central Committee.

In the spring of 1926 the MSM organised demonstrations by the unemployed in several towns and sent deputations to the authorities demanding benefits for the unemployed. Communists and MSM members organised a famous march of miners from Salgótarján to Budapest.

The MSM made serious efforts to consolidate the trade union movement and to secure the election to leading bodies of the trade uni-

¹ *DMFMT 1919-1929*, pp. 254-57.

ons of men who supported the tactics of class struggle. In October 1926 the MSM leadership turned to the leaders of the SDPH with a proposal that the two parties should join forces in a common fight for a republic, for complete freedom of association and assembly, for new land reforms and other democratic demands. It was also suggested that they should join forces in the campaign for the parliamentary elections due to take place in December 1926. The leaders of the SDPH however turned down this proposal from the MSM for such joint action.¹

Most important was the activity of the CPH and MSM in publishing and distributing the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and V. I. Lenin, materials relating to the international labour movement which painted a true picture of the life in the Soviet Union. The CPH underground periodic press (the journal *Uj Marcius* and the newspaper *Kommunista*) also helped to propagate Marxist-Leninist ideas, as did the legal press of the MSM (the newspaper *Szocialista Munkás* which had previously been published under various other titles). This propaganda of Marxist-Leninist ideas helped to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat and the toiling peasantry, to strengthen their revolutionary resolve and to consolidate the country's progressive forces in the revolutionary struggle.

While the MSM was not officially banned the Horthy government nevertheless adopted measures which virtually paralysed the activities of its leaders and grass-roots organisations. The leader of the MSM, István Vági, and his comrades-in-arms were arrested on a number of occasions. Dozens of activists were thrown into prison. The bourgeois press waged a slander campaign against the Party, in which opportunists from the SDPH played an active part. The MSM was robbed of opportunities for carrying out propaganda work among the population by threats and outright terror tactics. In 1928 the MSM was forced to cease its activities. Some of its members, who went underground, then joined the CPH. Others continued to work side by side with the Communists in the trade unions, in grass-roots social democratic organisations, and various types of cultural and educational associations. The situation within the Hungarian labour movement remained complex. The right-wing leadership under K. Peyer, D. Peydl and their supporters still dominated the SDPH: their collaborationist policies aimed at cooperation with the bourgeoisie dealt much harm to the revolutionary movement. The left wing of the SDPH, although it still enjoyed certain influence in the masses, was no longer in a position to change the Party's overall course.

The difficulties now intrinsic in their struggle gave rise to liquida-

¹ *HHRLM*, Vol. 2, pp. 87-88.

tionism, internal strife and a sectarian outlook within the ranks of the CPH. Some of the Communists had no clarity about how a united workers' front should best be set up and how the revolutionary struggle should best be organised.

The Plenary Meeting of the CPH Central Committee, held in July 1928, focused its attention on how best to continue the struggle of the revolutionary forces in Hungary. Liquidationist and factional views were condemned and all members were urged to strengthen unity within the Party's ranks and to promote the influence of the CPH among the working population. The plenary meeting considered a number of concrete organisational tasks aimed at activising the work of the Party in the trade unions, amongst the peasants, young people and in cultural and educational associations. The Central Committee of the CPH called upon all Communists to expose the reactionary foreign policy of the Horthy government, while at the same time energetically protesting against the growing threat of war.¹

In *Romania* during the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism the monarchy survived. The Constitution that had been adopted in 1923 had proclaimed democratic rights and freedoms, but in reality these rights had been seriously curtailed. The role of parliament in the country's political life was negligible. The Constitution had guaranteed the King's right to dissolve any parliament he might consider unacceptable. In the years that followed democratic rights and freedoms were progressively curtailed.

The partial stabilisation of capitalism had been achieved in *Romania* first and foremost by intensifying the exploitation of the working people, through longer working hours and larger work quotas. Other factors had also contributed to relatively high levels of economic development and a certain stabilisation in the country's political situation. As a result of territorial gains after the First World War the country's industrial potential had more than doubled. The agrarian reform announced in 1918-1921 consolidated the position of capitalists in the villages.

Nevertheless the ruling classes had not succeeded in bringing the struggle of the working people to a standstill. In 1925, 319 disagreements between labour and management were recorded, involving over 80,000 people.² The most lengthy and determined of these were the strikes by metal-workers from the Resița, workers from the saw-mills in the Muresh valley, and the textile workers from the Buhuși plant.

The major step taken by the working people which was to influence

¹ *DMFMT 1919-1929*, pp. 379-405.

² L. Pătrășcanu, *Texte social-politice (1921-1938)*, Bucharest, 1975, p. 146.

the general level of political struggle in the country was the Tatarbunar uprising in occupied Bessarabia (September 1924) when slogans were borne aloft calling for the setting up of workers' and peasants' Soviets and the reunion of Bessarabia with Soviet Russia. Troops ruthlessly suppressed the uprising and over 3,000 people were killed. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania (PCR) called upon the working people in a special manifesto to fight for their national and social liberation.¹ The Tatarbunar uprising aroused a wide response from abroad. The wave of protests against the ruthless action of the authorities not only swept right through Romania but also gave rise to a movement of solidarity with the Romanian workers among the democratic forces of other European countries.

The driving force and inspiration behind the ideological advance and struggle of the working people of Romania was the PCR which was being subjected to harsh reprisals. In April 1924 the Party was banned. The anti-communist "Mîrzescu Law" decreed that the spread of communist ideas was a punishable crime. The Communist Party, now obliged to go underground, concentrated its efforts on organising working-class action. In 1925 a legal organisation known as the Workers' and Peasants' Alliance was set up which aimed at carrying on the struggle against police terror, securing an amnesty for political prisoners, free elections, eight-hour working day, the granting of land to landless peasants and owners of small plots and at introducing progressive taxation. Acting with the support and direct leadership of the PCR the Workers' and Peasants' Alliance played an important part in strengthening the ties between the Communist Party of Romania and the working masses. At the parliamentary elections of 1926 the Workers' and Peasants' Alliance won 30,000 votes and five seats in parliament for communist deputies.²

By the end of the 1920s the partial stabilisation of capitalism began to go into decline. Romania was being pulled into a most serious economic crisis.

In the mid-1920s *Yugoslavia* entered a period of relatively favourable economic conditions. More employment was now available, wages had risen for certain categories of workers, although real wages in 1926 had not got back to the 1913-1914 level.³ The exploitation of semi-skilled workers, however, was on the increase, as was also

¹ *DI PCR, 1923-1928*. Vol. 2, Bucharest, 1953, pp. 198-201; *The History of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic*, Vol. II, Kishinev, 1968, p. 262 (in Russian).

² *Intrebări și răspunsuri pe teme din istoria Partidului Comunist Român și a mișcării muncitorești din România*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 150.

³ *Преглед историје Савеза комуниста Југославије*, Београд, 1963, стр. 142.

that of women workers and minors, and the capitalists were attacking more determinedly than ever the social gains of the working people.

The authorities subjected progressive workers' organisations to cruel harassment, obstructing every attempt by the proletariat to stand up against the capitalists' attack on the last traces of labour legislation. "Voluntary" fascist gangs used to attack working-class districts in the industrial centres and in mining settlements and also trade union premises.

The front of the political stage was occupied by bourgeois-nationalist and petty-bourgeois parties and groupings. In Croatia the party of Stefan Radić had by now gained a good deal of influence. At first the leadership used to oppose the policies of the Serb-dominated ruling circles. Under pressure from the peasant masses, which constituted the party's main political army, it advocated the fight for a democratic republic and presented its programme as that of national-liberation and social revolution. The party claimed to be the only champion of national equality, and large sections of the Croatian working people took up its demands, seeing in them the path to the practical implementation of every people's right to self-determination. Yet as time went on it became clearer that the leaders of Radić's party, particularly after his assassination in 1928, had no intention of carrying out their promises and had been indulging in unprincipled political manoeuvring. Meanwhile, bourgeois schemers in the leadership were acting as stooges for extreme chauvinists feeling their way to contacts with the imperialist reactionaries and with Italian and German fascists. This turn of events was fraught with tragic consequences for the working class and the people as a whole. In these conditions it was imperative to step up the fight to defend the interests of the working people and to mobilise all forces capable of checking the country's dangerous slide towards fascism.

A distinctive feature of the Yugoslavian labour movement consisted in the fact that the influence of the right-wing Social Democrats was very weak: they had compromised themselves once and for all by their subservience to the monarchy, the exploiter classes and the despotic militarists. The working people had no faith in the reformists, who had openly made use of official patronage.

Virtually the only workers' party in the country was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) which was then working underground. It bravely opposed the reactionary domestic policies of the regime in power, police repression and exploitation in industry. It tirelessly exposed the reactionary, pro-imperialist and anti-Soviet foreign policy of the Yugoslavian government, an initiator of the so-called Petite Entente, which, according to that outstanding figure from the

CPY, Filip Filipović, was "something like a mutual insurance society against revolution".¹

It was the Communist Party which was leading the working class in its struggle to defend its rights. In the summer of 1924, on the initiative of the CPY, meetings and strikes were held right across the country in protest against the terrorist acts committed by the police and the fascist gangs. In Zagreb a general strike was organised. In the years that followed there were mass-scale protests calling for a review of rates, and strikes by workers demanding better working conditions and higher wages.

The workers from the country's largest factories, despite the police harassment, celebrated Mayday every year. The main organisers of these meetings were the independent (revolutionary) trade unions and underground organisations of the CPY. At rallies and demonstrations of the working people they spoke for the setting up of a united front to oppose the preparations for a new world war. The workers of Yugoslavia celebrated the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. In November 1928 demonstrations of solidarity with the Soviet Union were held in a number of towns.

It was now vital that the working class should rally together its forces on the basis of the class struggle, surmount national strife, and create a firm alliance with the toiling peasantry and the middle strata of the urban population. To carry out these tasks it was important to consolidate the revolutionary vanguard and elaborate correct strategy and tactics.

A major obstacle faced by the CPY as it worked towards these objectives was that presented by the nationalist leanings that had become fairly widespread within the CPY. A right-wing grouping led by Sima Marković had introduced into the party openly "Austro-Marxist" views on the national question. In 1925 Filip Filipović, who was the most authoritative figure in the party at that time, opposed any such tendencies categorically, declaring that the CPY's reaction to Greater Serbian ideology had been too weak and pointing out how, as a result, the party "had broken away from the broad working masses of Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia", which meant that a crisis had emerged "the underlying causes of which should be sought in the social democratic legacy, in the insufficient ideological awareness of party members and in the isolation of the party from the masses".²

The internationalist core within the CPY received the full support of the Comintern. The Comintern made it clear that without complete

¹ B. Boshkovich, *The Petite Entente*, Moscow, 1934, p. 9 (in Russian). (B. Boshkovich was F. Filipović's literary pseudonym.)

² B. Boshkovich, "The Situation within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia", *The Communist International*, No. 4, 1925, p. 55 (in Russian).

and unconditional acceptance of Lenin's tenet with regard to the right of peoples to self-determination, even to the extent of separation, it was unthinkable that a Communist Party might pursue an effective national policy. At the 5th Extended Plenary Meeting of the CEC (March-April 1925) the views of Sima Marković and his supporters were subjected to far-reaching criticism. Held up for particularly harsh criticism were Marković's attempts to reduce the national question to a "constitutional issue" within the framework of the existing reactionary state: this for all intents and purposes amounted to a refusal to examine the national question as part of the overall question of proletarian revolution, as an issue that concerned above all the peasantry. In a resolution drawn up by the plenary meeting of the CEC it was stated: "The basis and core of the national question is not capitalist competition, but the *peasant question* and the all-important basis of the national movement, particularly in Yugoslavia, is the peasant movement."¹

"The proletarian revolution in Yugoslavia cannot achieve victory if the Communist Party of Yugoslavia fails to carry along with it the broad masses of the peasantry into the active struggle against the monarchy, against Serbian imperialism and capitalism."² At the plenary meeting it was stressed that the CPY official policy on the national question should include the point about the right of peoples to self-determination even to the extent of separation, and at the same time it was stressed that the right to separation by no means implied the necessity of separation. The 5th Comintern Congress during discussion of the communist parties in the Balkan countries condemned the "separatist tendencies in the solution of the national question" believing that the implementation of "the right of all peoples to self-determination, even to the extent of separation, has nothing to do with separatism as such, and in no way interferes with the development of productive forces".³

The principled position adopted by the Marxist-Leninist forces within the CPY and the support from the Comintern paved the way to the adoption of essentially correct principles in connection with the national and the peasant questions at the 3rd Congress of the CPY (May 1926). In 1959 Josip Broz Tito observed: "Thanks to help from the Comintern our Party was able to move towards a correct stand on the national and peasant questions."⁴

¹ *The 5th Extended Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (March 21-April 6, 1925). Verbatim Report, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, p. 594 (in Russian).*

² *Ibid.*, p. 597.

³ *The Communist International*, No. 7, London, December 1924-January 1925, p. 94.

⁴ *Socijalizam*, Issue 2, 1959, p. 9.

Yet the resolutions adopted at the 3rd CPY Congress did not improve the situation within the party after all: a grim struggle between the various factions within the leadership continued as before.

In May 1928 the CEC sent an Open Letter to all members of the CPY calling upon them to work from below to put a stop to the factional strife, that was holding back the ideological advance of the party and the growth of its membership, and also preventing it from strengthening its ties with the working class and the peasantry. In all party organisations discussions of the Open Letter were held which served to isolate the factionalists and expose them to criticism. The 4th CPY Congress (October 1928) elected a new set of leaders. The new secretary responsible for organisational matters was Djuro Djakovič.

In the second half of 1928 the political situation within Yugoslavia became extremely tense: the fight of the oppressed peoples for equal rights intensified. In the summer mass demonstrations against the monarchy and the fascists began in Slovenia and Croatia. The students and many representatives of the middle classes openly expressed their solidarity with the strikers. At the end of the year demonstrations of young workers were organised, and in Slovenia miners started a "communist march" on Ljubljana.

On January 6, 1929 King Alexander staged a coup d'état and the constitution was abrogated, then the central government and the local administration in the villages were dissolved, all parties and progressive organisations were banned. Through these draconian measures the reactionaries were trying to hold in check the growing state crisis and to put to rout the revolutionary movement.

The ranks of the CPY were thinned out by these blows of the counter-revolutionary regime. Many of the finest fighters in the communist movement perished in the reign of terror: three secretaries of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League, Mio Oreski, Paya Marganovič and Josip Kolumbo among them. In April 1929 Djuro Djakovič met his death at the hands of the gendarmes.

The new onslaught by the reactionaries against the working class was a heavy blow for the Communist Party and the working-class trade union and youth organisations. Yet even against this background of ruthless terror the CPY and the Young Communist League succeeded in winning new members from among those who had grown up in a world where the revolutionary struggle was a part of everyday life and who had been tenaciously seeking for ways in which to strengthen ties between the Communists and the masses. This was to make itself felt soon afterwards when the party emerged from its earlier state of isolation from the masses and began steadily to extend its influence.

The process of the stabilisation of capitalism in *Greece* began rela-

tively late because the country was very much dependent on foreign capital: in comparison with other European countries the stabilisation was not deep-rooted or of long duration. Major economic problems, growing discontent among the working people at their impoverished situation and the lack of rights, the uninterrupted struggle of the people against the capitalist yoke—all this led to the growing tension within the country at the time. In an attempt to stem the tide of class struggle, the bourgeoisie resorted to the aid of the extreme reactionaries. On June 25, 1925 the reactionary general F. Pangalos staged a coup d'état: the President was removed from office, progressive public figures were arrested and the Communist Party was banned.

Yet this dictatorial regime, based exclusively on military force, was unable to gain wide public support. On August 12, 1926 the Pangalos dictatorship was overthrown and a republic with parliament and president restored, in addition to which an amnesty for political prisoners was announced. On November 7, 1926 parliamentary elections took place. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) participated in the election campaign as a member of a "workers-peasants-refugees" league, which succeeded in winning ten parliamentary seats.

On June 2, 1927 a new constitution was adopted which legalised the republican government in Greece and proclaimed the basic democratic rights of all citizens. Despite this the material and social position of the working people remained a hard one. Low wages, the lack of any proper social insurance, high prices, unemployment, arbitrary rule of the factory- and land-owners inevitably aroused discontent among the broad strata of the population and gave them undeniable cause for seeking to promote class struggle.

Despite cruel harassment from the authorities and the semi-legal existence the Communist Party of Greece took an active part in the major actions by the working class and the toiling peasantry—the nation-wide strike of railwaymen in 1925, the nation-wide strike of tobacco-plantation workers in 1927 demanding higher wages, a shorter working day and better working conditions, and the mass demonstration of peasants in Salonika (1927) to campaign for the abolition of tithes.

The government responded to this resurgence of mass struggle with more repression than ever, the main thrust of which was directed against the Communists. At the beginning of 1928 the government prepared the draft of an anti-communist law designed to classify membership of the Communist Party as a serious crime; members of the Party and their supporters would henceforth be sentenced to exile without trial or investigation.

The KKE protested vehemently against this law and called upon

the working people to take up the fight. The appeal by the Communists met with a broad response from the masses. In the summer of 1928 a mass-scale strike movement got underway in which over 85,000 workers from the tobacco industry, building workers, sailors, and workers from the footwear and catering industries, took part. As a result of these large-scale strikes, voting in parliament on the draft for the anti-communist law was dropped. On July 4, 1928 the government of Alexandros Zaimes was forced to resign.

In order to undermine the struggle of the working people the ruling circles in Greece strove to deal their heaviest blows at the trade union movement which was to a considerable extent under the influence of the KKE. In 1928 they succeeded in splitting the trade union movement and engineering the expulsion of revolutionary trade unions from the General Confederation of Greek Labour (GCGL) and the former then proceeded in February of the next year to set up an independent United General Confederation of Labour of Greece (UGCLG).

In *Albania* the working class, small in numbers and scattered in what were mostly mere craft shops, lacked its own organisations or parties. Socialist ideas were making their way into Albania by way of the progressive émigré press, their influence at that time, however, was far from strong. It was only towards the end of the 1920s that it became possible to organise the first communist group in the town of Korçë, the main core of which consisted of workers. The workers of Albania were beginning to take part in the activities of general democratic organisations and groups that had come into being in the early 1920s. The largest and most influential of these was the society Bashkimi (Unity), that was set up in 1922. The bulk of the membership of this society consisted of teachers, white-collar workers, and representatives of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The society's programme included struggle for the implementation of democratic reforms, the introduction of agrarian reforms and the promotion of Albanian national industry. The Bashkimi society led the opposition to the government that was headed by Colonel Ahmed Zogu, who upheld the interests of the feudal landowners.

On April 20, 1924 one of the leaders of the opposition Avni Rustemi was fatally wounded in Tirana when shot at from round a street-corner. His funeral turned into a nation-wide anti-government demonstration that provided the signal for an uprising that swept through the country. This was how the bourgeois-democratic revolution began.

The administrative committee that led the uprising was headed by a prominent political figure, a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, Fan Noli. The Bashkimi society supported him and at the same time called for a purge of the state apparatus and the "guarantee of eco-

economic independence to the peasantry by means of wide-scale agrarian reforms" and demanded that "true democracy be restored".¹

Fan Noli's government put forward a programme for democratic and socio-economic reforms and opted to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The government's programme was greeted with enthusiasm by the masses. Without waiting for instructions from the central authorities the peasants often divided up the landowners' estates of their own accord and refused to pay duties. The local administrative apparatus, however, dominated as it was by supporters of the ousted regime, sabotaged the implementation of the democratic reforms. As a result the declarations made by the government were to remain nothing but paper promises.

The position of the democratic government was made more serious by the isolation of Albania from the other countries. In December 1924 the feudal regime headed by Colonel Ahmed Zogu was reinstated with energetic support from foreign reactionaries. Progressive organisations were banned and their leaders were forced to emigrate. In Vienna they set up an organisation called Konare (National-revolutionary Committee) which took up the Bashkimi programme.²

DIFFICULTIES IN ORGANISING OPPOSITION TO FASCISM AND THE REACTIONARIES

The working people of *Italy* were putting up their fight in exceptionally difficult conditions. After Mussolini had come to power in October 1922 a fascist regime took root in the country which served the interests of powerful monopoly capital. Although in the beginning parliament still officially existed, as indeed the multi-party system, in practice bourgeois-democratic institutions were being used as a screen for a policy of terror.

The fascists made short work of the trade unions and the political organisations of the working class, directing their main blows against its revolutionary vanguard. The Communist Party of Italy (PCI) had to make many of its primary branches transfer to an illegal status even before the party was officially banned.³ The PCI membership fell as low as twelve thousand at the beginning of 1924.⁴ There had also been a sharp fall in the membership of the General Confederation of Labour. By December the ranks of the GCL numbered 270,000.⁵

¹ *Dokumenta e materiale historike nga lufta e popullit shqiptar për liri e demokraci. 1917-1941*, Tirana, 1959, pp. 150, 151.

² *A Short History of Albania*, Moscow, 1965, p. 212 (in Russian).

³ P. Spriano, *Storia del partito comunista Italiano*, Vol. 1, Turin, 1967, p. 338.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

Fascist trade union organisations were also gaining influence at this time: membership of a fascist trade union guaranteed employment. The militancy of the working class was on the decline and there had been a marked drop in the level of a strike activity. Using the support of the fascist government entrepreneurs began their offensive against the economic gains of the working people, that had been obtained in the years of revolutionary enthusiasm.¹ In October 1924 the cost of living in Italy was significantly higher than in 1920.² The eight-hour working day was not observed and taxes were rising rapidly.

The Italian working class could only protect its economic rights if it could inflict political defeat upon the fascists. The task of organising anti-fascist resistance was complicated by the parties of bourgeois democracy which chose to turn a blind eye to the fascists and which were joined in this by the Social Democrats. The passivity of bourgeois-democratic opposition in defending the remnants of bourgeois-democratic freedoms and institutions from the relentless pressure of the fascists can be explained above all by the fact that the bourgeois-democratic parties saw in fascism a barrier between them and the threat of socialist revolution.

Among the social democratic leaders it was widely held that the victory of fascism in Italy would be retribution for the proletariat's failure to appreciate the opportunities provided by bourgeois democracy. Even after the fascists had come to power the social democratic leaders continued to assert that the protection of democracy could not be effected without a fight to hold back the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. Moreover, and this was acknowledged by one of the social democratic spokesmen Rodolfo Mondolfo, among the Social Democrats were those who considered fascism a "rejuvenating force" assuming that later it would "give way to an association of labour".³

At a time when the bourgeois-democratic opposition was capitulating, only the Communists could lead the anti-fascist resistance. The achievement of the PCI lies in the fact that in most difficult conditions, when fascist reaction was rampant and the labour and democratic movements were gripped by a state of bewildered confusion it adopted the only proper course—leading the revolutionary proletariat forward to the accomplishment of a new historic task, that of uniting all forces in the struggle against fascism.

In his day Lenin, when warning the Italian Communists about the threat of fascism, had suggested that the Italian Communists would

¹ Rosario Romeo, *Breve storia della grande industria in Italia*, Bologna, 1961, p. 101.

² P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

³ R. Modigliani, *Una battaglia per il socialismo*, Bologna, 1971, p. 72.

draw the necessary lessons from that situation and elaborate a new course of action, turning to "part of the Russian experience" as they did so and applying it to the conditions obtaining in their own country. Lenin wrote at the time: "Just how that will be done, I do not know. The fascists in Italy may, for example, render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds."¹ The profound implications of these words of Lenin addressed to the Italian Communists became even clearer in the light of the subsequent experience of the international fight of the working class, including that of the Italian working class, against fascism.

The change in the PCI policy on the question of campaigning for a united workers' front was largely due to the work of Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti. In June 1923, in accordance with a resolution adopted at an Extended Plenary Meeting of the CEC, the PCI came under new leadership, that of Gramsci, Togliatti, Mauro Scoccimarro and Egidio Gennari. Gramsci became General Secretary of the party. In the spring of 1924 he was given the chance of returning to Italy and was then able to lead the Communist Party's struggle against the fascists on the spot. The new leadership of the PCI, with the support of the Comintern behind it, carried out wide-scale work to raise the political consciousness of the Communists in their campaign against the sectarian ideology of Amadeo Bordiga, to swell the PCI's ranks and to strengthen its ties with the masses.

In those years Gramsci and Togliatti devoted a good deal of attention to analysing the situation that had taken shape in Italy. They endeavoured to single out the specific characteristics of the emergent fascist regime, to pick out all possible forces which might join the anti-fascist opposition, and, in the light of these facts, to elaborate appropriate tactics for the anti-fascist struggle of the proletariat. Starting out from well-known views of the Comintern with regard to the class essence of fascism Gramsci wrote in August 1926 that "modern fascism is a typical example of the total domination of finance capital endeavouring to gain control of all the country's productive forces".² Even before the emergency laws of 1926 were introduced Gramsci had described Mussolini's regime as a "fascist dictatorship"³ which had set up a powerful police network, and he had exposed the fascist policies for wiping out proletarian activists. He also pointed out that "the characteristic feature of fascism consists in the fact that it has succeeded in creating a mass organisation of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1973, p. 431.

² Antonio Gramsci, *Scritti politici*. Vol. III, Rome, 1973, p. 201.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

petty bourgeoisie".¹ "It is the first time in history," Gramsci stressed, "that this has happened".² He also pointed to another essential feature of the fascist regime, "its control over all forms of mass activity".³

In his description of the anti-fascist struggle and the forces behind it in Italy, Gramsci shattered the illusion that the struggle against fascism could be carried out from within parliament. He urged that fascism should be opposed "through direct action", that it should be overthrown by revolutionary methods, reiterating that "only the working class could put up effective opposition to fascism".⁴ Gramsci came out unequivocally against Bordiga's sectarian ideas and supported the policy of a united front in the anti-fascist struggle of the proletariat.

As early as February 1924 Gramsci, well aware of the real balance of forces within the country, raised the question as to the possibility of an intermediate phase between the victory over fascism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁵ While developing this idea in a report to a meeting of the PCI leaders in August 1926, Gramsci stated that "it is not absolutely certain, indeed not likely that there will be a direct transition from fascism to the dictatorship of the proletariat".⁶ While acknowledging the possibility that the anti-fascist struggle could develop in this way, Gramsci nevertheless held that the party should go out of its way to establish its leadership over the other anti-fascist forces "so that the overthrow of fascism by revolutionary means might become an increasingly real possibility".⁷

At the beginning of 1924 the PCI, supported by Comintern resolutions, embarked on the implementation of the united-front policy.⁸

In January 1924 the PCI turned to the two socialist parties (the maximalist PSI and the reformist, so-called united socialist party PSU) with the proposal that they should form an electoral alliance of three parties for the forthcoming elections. Both parties rejected the proposal. Nevertheless in February 1924 the Proletarian Unity alliance was formed although on a far narrower base than originally

¹ Antonio Gramsci, op. cit., p. 100.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibid., p. 177. For further details on Gramsci's view of the nature of fascism and the character of the anti-fascist struggle see I. V. Grigoryeva, *The Historic Ideas of Antonio Gramsci*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 157-64 (in Russian).

⁴ Antonio Gramsci, op. cit., p. 86.

⁵ Quoted from: Palmiro Togliatti, *La formazione del gruppo dirigente del partito comunista italiano nel 1923-1924*, Rome, 1962, pp. 199-200.

⁶ Antonio Gramsci, op. cit., p. 203.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 203-04.

⁸ M. A. Dodolev, *Democratic Opposition and the Labour Movement in Italy (1922-1926)*, Moscow, 1975, p. 57 (in Russian).

planned: it was an electoral alliance of the PCI and the left wing of the PSI, the so-called "Third International" group, i.e., a group supporting the Third Communist International led by Giacinto Serrati and Fabrizio Maffi. In the parliamentary elections of April 1924 the Communists together with the "Third International" group gained 19 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.¹ From now on this parliamentary rostrum was courageously used by these deputies to expose the fascist regime.²

In May 1924 an illegal conference of the PCI was held in Como. In his report to the conference Gramsci declared that in the existing situation the task before the Italian proletariat was not one of the direct attack. The most important thing was to turn the PCI into a mass organisation and to work consistently towards securing the leading role in the anti-fascist struggle for the proletariat.³ A majority of the Central Committee of the PCI supported the policy put forward by Gramsci.

The policy of the new PCI leadership was put to a gruelling test in the period of the acute political crisis that hit the fascist regime in 1924-1925, known as the Matteotti crisis. The crisis had been sparked off by the fascists' murder of the social democratic deputy Giacomo Matteotti, after he had given a denunciatory speech in parliament. As a sign of protest at this fascist retribution the members of the opposition—representatives of the radical and liberal bourgeoisie, and also Catholics, Social Democrats and Socialists—walked out of parliament and announced that they were setting up a Committee of Opposition Parties. This anti-fascist coalition set up on June 13 came to be known as the Aventino bloc.⁴ The communist deputies joined the Aventino bloc in order to urge it to organise mass anti-fascist struggle and so as to use it to strengthen the PCI's ties with the masses.

The predominant mood in Italy's cities, particularly those in the south, was one of deep discontent with the fascist regime. In the first days of the crisis the workers of Genoa went on strike, as did the construction-workers in Rome, the metal-workers and dockers in Naples, and the metal-workers of Bari.⁵ In the south there were spontaneous popular demonstrations in Catania and Foggia⁶ and in Naples a large rally was held in protest against the fascist brutality,

¹ P. Spriano, op. cit., pp. 340-41.

² B. R. Lopukhov, *Fascism and the Labour Movement in Italy, 1919-1929*, Moscow, 1968, p. 220 (in Russian).

³ *L'Unità*, June 5, 1924.

⁴ On account of the association with the Aventino Hill, to which, according to legend, the plebs of Ancient Rome had withdrawn during their struggle against the patricians.

⁵ P. Spriano, op. cit., p. 390.

⁶ Ibid.

which ended in clashes between the demonstrators and the black-shirts. Many students and professors made public anti-fascist statements. Flags of mourning were hoisted over university buildings in memory of the victims of fascism. In the north during the first few months of the political crisis no major action by the workers took place as the fascists had firm control of the masses.

The course pursued by the PCI during the Matteotti crisis had been elaborated with the participation of the Comintern. The 5th Comintern Congress paid close attention to the Italian question and it was discussed at a meeting of the Comintern's Italian Commission.

The Congress set the PCI the task of setting free from "fascist influence the discontented and disappointed strata of the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat" and suggested that particular attention be paid to work among the peasants, especially in the South.¹ However the Action Programme for the Italian Communist Party elaborated by the Italian Commission was not yet completely free of traces of "leftism". In the document there was, for instance, reference to the fact that the PCI should "remove from the political arena" during the Matteotti crisis parties of the constitutional opposition and reformists and rally to its cause the proletarian and peasant masses for the "revolutionary struggle to win power".² This undue haste in the specification of political objectives made it harder for the Communists to campaign for the setting up of a broad anti-fascist coalition.

At the first meeting of the Aventino bloc on June 14, 1924 Gramsci proposed that it should be turned into a focus of power based on effective mass action—a general strike. When this proposal was turned down the PCI addressed itself to the masses independently, using the slogans: "Down with the Government of Murderers! Disarm the White Guard! Set up a Government of Workers and Peasants!"³ The Committee of Opposition Parties, in defiance of the Communists, adopted a resolution, which condemned spontaneous action by the working people against the regime. Two days later the Committee decreed that its resolutions were binding for all parties and "rule out any initiative or manifestation contrary to these resolutions".⁴ In a response to this decision Filippo Turati in a letter to his wife and comrade-in-arms Anna Kuliscioff, dated June 18, 1924, wrote that the Communists had been warned: "Either for us or out".⁵ That same day the PCI representatives left the Committee of Opposition Parties "to assert the independence of the proletariat and to

¹ *The 5th International Congress of the Communist International. Verbatim Report, Part II*, p. 168.

² *Ibid.*

³ P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

⁴ *Avanti!*, June 19, 1924.

⁵ Filippo Turati, Anna Kuliscioff, *Carteggio*, Vol. VI, Turin, 1959, p. 212.

create conditions in which the working class would be able later to recognise its historic functions as leader of the other anti-capitalist classes in the struggle against fascism and the capitalist order".¹

From that moment on the Communist Party was waging a struggle on two fronts: against fascism and against the Aventino bloc. In keeping with a decision of the Committee of Opposition Parties the Communist Party organised a 24-hour general strike on June 27, 1924 to commemorate the anniversary of Matteotti's death, in which over 270,000 people took part.²

The course adopted by the PCI to encourage mass action was totally in accord with the demands of the prevailing situation: by now broad strata of the population were filled with indignation at the fascist regime. In his report to the plenary meeting of the PCI Central Committee in August 1924, Antonio Gramsci put forward the idea that a People's Parliament (or Anti-parliament) should be set up in defiance of the fascist Chamber of Deputies. The task of setting up workers' and peasants' committees as grass-roots organisations for the struggle against the fascist dictatorship was also discussed.³

The Committee of Opposition Parties refused to even consider the PCI's proposals. Then the PCI leadership decided to send the communist deputies back into parliament so as to use that platform for exposing the true nature of fascism. At the same time the Communists began to set up workers' and peasants' committees. In June 1925 the PCI turned to the leaders of the left parties in the Aventino bloc with the proposal that they should work out a common course of action in the struggle against fascism. The PCI suggested that they should set up a republican assembly based on the workers' and peasants' committees. This would not mean that bourgeois democracy was being restored, but that a progressive republican order would be established that would secure the country against a resurgence of fascism. The convening of such an assembly would, according to the Communists, have meant the beginning of a transitional period of democracy, after which there would have been opportunities for promoting proletarian struggle for power on the basis of the workers' and peasants' committees. The proposal by the PCI was turned down by the leaders of the left parties within the Aventino bloc.

By the autumn of 1924 the PCI membership had risen to 25,000⁴ (as against 10-12 thousand at the end of 1923).⁵ The Party was being reorganised on the production-based principle. In August 1924 the

¹ Partito comunista d'Italia. Sezione dell'I. C. Relazione della Centrale al III Congresso, s.l., s.d., p. 7.

² P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

"Third International" group that had been expelled from the PSI came over to join the Communists. This group included Giacinto Serrati, Fabrizio Maffi, Giuseppe Di Vittorio and Girolamo Li Causi. The circulation of the newspaper *L'Unita* had risen to 400,000 and yet, despite all this, the influence of the PCI was not yet sufficiently strong to raise up the broad masses of the population to join the fight against fascism.

Meanwhile the passivity of the Aventino bloc had allowed Mussolini to weather the political crisis. The fascist parliament resumed its work and Mussolini declared that he intended to put an end to the opposition by force. The appeal by the bourgeois parties of the Aventino bloc to the King with the request that he might support their efforts to restore a constitutional regime fell on deaf ears. The King did not only fail to respond to this appeal, but on the contrary he gave his support to Mussolini. In September-October 1925 the Aventino bloc virtually collapsed, after the Socialists and Republicans had turned their back on it.

The 3rd Congress of the PCI which was held in Lyons focused its attention on the problems involved in turning the party into a mass organisation and establishing the hegemony of the proletariat in the fight against fascism. At the Congress, when stressing the need to create a mass party of the working class, Gramsci noted that the most urgent task of all was to win over to the side of the proletariat the peasantry from the economically backward South, where the main mass of landless peasants, ready to rise up against the landowners, was concentrated.¹

Togliatti then put forward a brave proposal: the Communists should infiltrate the fascist trade unions and from inside undermine the mass base of the fascist movement.

In the Theses prepared by Gramsci and Togliatti and approved by the vast majority of the Congress delegates it was established that the main objective was to set up a united front of workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletariat in order to fight for the overthrow of the capitalist system. The adoption of these Lyons Theses signified the shift of the majority within the PCI to a Marxist-Leninist position.

After the Lyons Congress the PCI launched wide-scale political and organisational activity. Particularly important was the experience gleaned by the PCI in working among the peasants of the South, where in the autumn of 1924 the Peasants' Protection Association was set up.²

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, London, 1957, pp. 28-29.

² *Forty Years of the Communist Party of Italy*, Moscow, 1961, p. 148 (in Russian).

During the second half of the 1920s the Italian Communists began also to advocate an alliance with left elements in the Catholic peasant organisations. In the North the PCI succeeded in arranging co-operation between red trade unions and "white" Catholic organisations, led by the left-wing Catholic Guido Miglioli.¹ In November 1926, however, Mussolini introduced emergency laws. The fascist dictatorship had now come into its own: all opposition parties and their publications were banned and then there followed mass arrests. Many of the leaders of the PCI were thrown into prison. In November Gramsci was arrested and left to rot in prison for ten whole years. The Communist Party had been dealt a bitter blow.

In this new political situation the Socialists and the petty-bourgeois opposition parties renounced active struggle within Italy itself and moved their headquarters abroad. In Paris these parties joined together to form the Anti-Fascist League whose activities were confined to propagating anti-fascist ideas among Italian émigrés in France and other countries. It is revealing to note that the socialist leaders at this time virtually renounced the organisation of anti-fascist action in their own country, regarding the latter as impossible in the framework of a fascist dictatorship.

As for the reformist leaders of the trade union movement, many of these openly supported the fascist regime. On January 4, 1927 the Executive Committee of the General Confederation of Labour announced that the Confederation was being disbanded, and on January 16 seven of its former leaders declared they were ready to cooperate with the fascist regime and to this end they set up the Society for the Study of Labour Problems.²

As a result of the capitulation of the bourgeois and reformist opposition it was left to the PCI to organise the anti-fascist struggle within Italy against tremendous odds.

In January 1927 the foreign headquarters of the PCI was set up in Paris with Togliatti as its head; he soon established contact with the underground party organisations in Italy and began to supervise the fight against fascism on Italian soil.

At that time Togliatti devoted a great deal of attention to theoretical questions, concentrating on an analysis of the essential features of fascism and specific methods for combatting it.³ Togliatti saw the distinctive features of Italian fascism to lie in its endeavour to consolidate and broaden its base of popular support, including working-class support, and then, in order to achieve this goal, to create

¹ *L'Unità*, May 29, 1926.

² B. R. Lopukhov, op. cit., p. 279.

³ N. P. Komolova, G. S. Filatov, "Palmiro Togliatti—A Leading Figure in the Italian and International Communist Movement", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, Issue 4, 1980, p. 87.

mass organisations subordinated to the fascist state. Fascism was thus turning into a reactionary regime with support among the masses, that had acquired a totalitarian character. This led Togliatti to conclude that Communists needed to work inside the fascist organisations. He saw this task as important in connection with the objective of establishing working-class leadership for the anti-fascist struggle. Togliatti considered that fascism could only be done away with if overthrown by violent means, which would take the form of anti-fascist revolution.¹

Togliatti pointed to the need to take into account two possible courses of development for the anti-fascist revolution: either it would develop from the outset as a proletarian revolution if the working class succeeded in establishing itself as the dominant force within the anti-fascist movement, or there would be a transition period between the fall of the fascists and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The way in which the anti-fascist revolution developed would depend on whether the working class managed to establish itself as dominant over the other anti-fascist forces. Togliatti reminded his fellow-Communists that this leading role could only be achieved in the course of the struggle.²

Gradually the underground work of the Communist Party in Italy became well organised. Despite harsh repression the illegal home-based headquarters of the Communist Party in Milan continued to operate, supervising the underground anti-fascist activities on the spot. The main centre of communist anti-fascist activity was the industrial triangle Turin-Milan-Genoa. The communist newspaper *L'Unità* was being distributed illegally.

After condemning the decision of the CGT to disband, the Communists took upon themselves the task of setting up a new underground and revolutionary trade union organisation in February 1927 which inherited the already familiar name of CGT. So as to enhance the unity of the trade union movement the leadership of the CGT declared that the Confederation was prepared to remain affiliated to the Amsterdam International. The leadership of the international reformist body refused to accept the new CGT as one of its sections. Furthermore the leaders of the original CGT, who had emigrated to France, declared soon after their arrival that they were going to reconvene the reformist CGT that would be led from the foreign-based headquarters. From that time on there were two Italian trade union bodies operating under the same name. The revolutionary trade union organisation concentrated on promoting strikes despite the ban on these and the reign of terror under the fascist dictatorship. The

¹ P. Togliatti, *Opere*, Vol. 2, p. 526.

² *Ibid.*

largest strike was that of the women-workers in the rice-fields in the Po Valley on June 1, 1927.¹ The Communists by this time were also beginning to carry out propaganda work within the fascist trade unions, although on a limited scale.

Mass arrests dealt the Communist Party a heavy blow yet again. In May and June 1925 almost all the leaders of the Milan-based headquarters of the party were arrested. An open trial was then organised in Rome of 37 Italian Communists, including Gramsci. A special tribunal sentenced Gramsci to twenty years imprisonment. Yet the fascists still did not succeed in routing the PCI. In conditions of the strictest secrecy grass-roots communist groups continued to operate, which were later to become vital bases for the intricate illegal communist network of organisations that played such a crucial role in the development of the anti-fascist Resistance movement.

The struggle waged by the working class in *Spain* was also one beset by difficult conditions. After the military dictatorship led by Primo de Rivera had been established in 1923, the Spanish parliament and local administration network were dissolved and constitutional rights revoked. All parties, except the Socialist one which had not opposed the regime, were banned. Harsh repressive measures were meted out against the Communist Party.² More than 20 per cent of the Spanish Communists and hundreds of worker activists were thrown into prison.³ The largest of the country's trade-union bodies—the National Confederation of Labour (CNT)—led by prominent anarcho-syndicalists was forced underground.

The de Rivera government sought to lend the state a corporate character. In factories special "mixed committees" were set up consisting of representatives from the work-force and the management to fix norms for work quotas and wage rates. Primo de Rivera's attempts to achieve cooperation with the social democrat leaders were also designed to serve the objective of integrating the labour movement into the corporate system. In October 1924 the secretary of the General Union of Workers (UGT), Largo Caballero, was brought into this system as an advisor to the State Council of the dictatorship.⁴ In the National Assembly that had been instituted in 1927 representatives of the UGT and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) were given six seats. The social democratic leaders supported the corporate policy of Primo de Rivera and took part in the "mixed committees" for arbitration. The rank-and-file Socialists and many

¹ *Thirty Years in the Life and Work of the Communist Party of Italy. A Collection of Articles and Documents.* Moscow, 1953, p. 644 (in Russian).

² *Historia del Partido Comunista de España*, Paris, 1960, p. 42.

³ *Spain 1918-1972*, Moscow, 1975, p. 37 (in Russian).

⁴ S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Socialist Workers' Party of Spain, 1931-1939*, Moscow 1966, p. 6 (in Russian).

activists, however, took a hostile view of this dictatorial regime. As a result when the crisis of the dictatorship first made itself felt the Socialist Workers' Party went over to the opposition.

The Communist Party PCE opposed the Primo de Rivera dictatorship right from the start. As early as September 1923 the Communists of Madrid had adopted a manifesto in which they warned that "the reactionaries were preparing to persecute all the organisations of the proletarian movement"¹ and called upon the working people to form a united front against the dictatorship. The efforts of the PCE aimed at consolidating the anti-fascist forces produced results in early 1926, when the PCE together with the Young Communist League, the CNT and autonomous trade unions affiliated to the Comintern issued an appeal urging all opposition forces to unite for the overthrow of the dictatorship.²

By 1926-1927 the strike movement of the proletariat was becoming more active. In October 1927 a 24-hour general strike against the corporations law and the review of the constitution was organised in the Basque Provinces under communist leadership. In 1928 as a result of the general strikes in Barcelona and Seville workers wrested from the government resolutions to the effect that an eight-hour working day would be introduced and that income tax deductions from pay would no longer be made. Workers from the reformist unions began to take part in the strikes, that is from unions which had been affiliated to the General Union of Workers.

In August 1929 the 3rd Congress of the PCE was held in secret. The Congress correctly defined the prospects for the country's political future pointing out that in Spain conditions would soon be ripe for bourgeois-democratic revolution but that this revolution would only prove successful if the working class were to assume the leading role in it.

In the mid-1920s in *Portugal* a long economic and political crisis dragged on. The Democratic Party then in power was unable to safeguard the country's advance along a bourgeois-democratic path of development. The government's economic policy dealt cruel blows at the interests of the working people. The working class responded to this situation by stepping up its strike action. The dominant influence in the Portuguese labour movement was that of the anarcho-syndicalists. The General Confederation of Labour, which they led, had over 100,000 members. The predominance of anarchist ideas in the labour movement made it impossible to channel the working people's action into an independent political movement.³ The Com-

¹ *Historia del Partido Comunista de España*, p. 40.

² S. P. Pozharskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³ A. Cunhal, *Algumas experiências de 50 anos de luta do Partido Comunista Portugues*, Lisbon, 1975, p. 6.

Communist Party of Portugal (PCP) which had been set up in 1921 was still relatively small and weak. On the other hand, the broad masses of the working people and the peasants and part of the urban bourgeoisie were feeling disillusioned by the Democratic Party that had proved incapable of bringing any stability into the country's economic and political situation.

Reactionary organisations supported by the powerful landowners and the elite from the world of finance and industry, exploited the contradictions in the Republican camp. On May 28, 1926 the army staged a fascist coup and set up a dictatorship. The Republican parties, including the Socialists, who had been in opposition under the rule of the Democrats, welcomed the new regime. It was only the Communist Party which came out against the coup, but it was too weak to mobilise the masses to oppose the fascist threat. The CGT adopted a neutral stand. The reactionary essence of the new dictatorship soon became clear. Anarchist organisations, the socialist and other parties disbanded themselves or were eliminated in the wake of repression. The party organisations of the as yet far from strong PCP collapsed and most of the leaders of the party abandoned their political activities. After 1929 the party, now led by Bento Gonçalves, and supported by the Comintern, reorganised its work underground and began to operate like a genuinely Marxist-Leninist party.¹ The PCP was the only party which, while working underground, was able to continue the struggle against the fascist dictatorship.

PROBLEMS FACING THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN EUROPE

The post-war crisis in *Scandinavia* was followed by growth in production everywhere, and more concentration and monopolisation in industry. The highest economic indices were those for Sweden. With regard to industrial rates of growth (up to 7 per cent a year) Sweden had overtaken the United States in the second half of the 1920s and also all the countries of Western Europe. The share of the working class in the total population was constantly growing. By the end of the 1920s workers in industry and agriculture constituted over 50 per cent of the country's population.²

Despite this growth in production the question of unemployment was as acute as ever. In 1925-1927 the average rate of unemployment in Sweden was 11.5 per cent of the total number of union members,

¹ Ibid., p. 8.

² A. S. Kan, *A Contemporary History of Sweden*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 79, 86 (in Russian).

in Denmark it was 16 per cent and in Norway around 21 per cent.¹ The working people lived under the constant threat of losing their jobs. This uncertainty over what the future held in store was reflected in the progressive fall in the birthrate in Norway and Sweden. By the end of the 1920s Sweden had the lowest birthrate in Europe.

The enormous reserve work force created the strong economic pressure on the workers. The bourgeoisie, which was gathering in large profits at this economically prosperous period often gave in to the economic demands of the workers in order to avert social conflict and so as to educate them in a spirit of class cooperation. These concessions went hand in hand with the introduction of laws that curtailed workers' rights to protect their own interests by means of strikes and other forms of mass struggle. At the end of the 1920s the governments in all the Scandinavian countries passed laws directed against the workers,

In 1927 the Norwegian parliament adopted new legislation that instituted a new labour court to resolve conflicts resulting from the interpretation of collective agreements. The law also provided for stronger repressive measures against the unions for "wild-cat" strikes, and that practically encouraged strike-breakers. In Denmark the bourgeoisie's encroachment on workers' rights was followed by the ratification of a law in 1928 which was designed to protect "free labour".² In 1928 in Sweden two laws were passed that were directed against the workers—one regarding collective agreements and the other regarding compulsory arbitration in industrial disputes. These laws were all aimed at curtailing workers' right to strike or engage in other forms of economic struggle.

These policies of bourgeois reformism involving the stripping of workers of their rights to engage in mass struggle were clearly compatible with the pragmatic calculations of the social democratic leaders who supported improved material conditions for the workers but took a negative view of mass action as a means of struggle. Economic demands of the working people were satisfied after long procedures of negotiation between union leaders and factory-owners. This meant that workers' victories in their struggle to have their economic demands met were not always consolidated by similar success in the political education of the working masses.

The leaders of the Social Democratic Party in Sweden who had assumed their positions after the death of Hjalmar Branting in 1925 (P. Albin Hansson, Ernst Wigforss, Rickard Sandler) abandon-

¹ *The International Trade Union Movement in 1924-1927. Report of the Executive Office to the 4th Profintern Congress, Moscow, 1928*, p. 517 (in Russian) E. Lorenz, *Arbeiderbevegelsens historie*, Vol. 2, 1930-1973, Oslo, 1975, p. 214.

² A. S. Kan, *The History of the Scandinavian Countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden)*, Moscow 1980, pp. 190, 192 (in Russian).

ed all revolutionary phrases that their predecessors had sometimes resorted to. The leader of the party Hansson maintained that class struggle had been replaced by class cooperation and that revolution itself was becoming unnecessary since the "democratic path"¹ had now been discovered for transforming the bourgeois state into a "house for the people".²

By blurring the dividing line between the ideology and policy of these parties and bourgeois ideology and policy, the social democratic leaders confined their differences with the bourgeois parties to concrete practical issues. Revolutionary currents in the labour movements in these countries were not sufficiently influential to provide any serious resistance to the drift of the Social Democrats to the right. As a result the consolidation of social democracy in Scandinavia on a basis of class collaboration gave rise to less disagreement than in other European countries.

During the period of the temporary partial stabilisation of capitalism the social democratic parties of the Scandinavian countries gained experience of participation in government.

Between 1924 and 1926 the government of Sweden was led by Social Democrats for the third time. In the elections of 1924 the Social Democratic Party of Sweden (SSP) won more than a hundred seats in the Lower House of parliament for the first time.

Twice during the period of the temporary partial stabilisation of capitalism the Danish Social Democrats assumed power. In 1924 the Danish Social Democrats after winning 40 per cent of the vote became the largest party in the country. The leader of the Socialist Democratic Party of Denmark (DSP) Thorvald Stauning formed the country's first social democratic government (1924-1926). The parties of the big bourgeoisie, however, which enjoyed a firm majority in the Upper House, for all intents and purposes paralysed the reformist activity of the social democratic government.

In 1927 the Norwegian Workers' Party merged with the Social Democratic Party of Norway. The new party retained the name Norwegian Workers' Party (NAP). In the elections of 1927 the new joint party won 37 per cent of the votes.³ At the beginning of 1928 the first workers' government in Norway's history was formed under Christian Hornsrud. The declaration by the government that it sought to "facilitate and prepare the transition to a socialist society"⁴ in the interests of the workers, made the bourgeoisie obstruct the

¹ P. A. Hansson, *Vår väg till seger*, Stockholm, 1935, p. 8.

² S. Hadenins, B. Molin, H. Wieslander, *Sverige efter 1900. En modern politisk historia*, Stockholm, 1968, p. 139.

³ H. F. Dahl, *Norge mellom krigene. Det norske samfunn i krise og konflikt. 1918-1940*, Oslo, 1973, p. 62.

⁴ *Norges Kommunistiske Partis historie*, Vol. 1, Oslo, 1963, p. 227.

financial dealings of the state. The Hornsrud government fell after a mere 18 days in power.

Stabilisation of the economy and the collaboration with the bourgeoisie, which the social democratic leaders indulged in, led to a decline in the labour and democratic movements. By the end of the 1920s there had been a definite drop in the level of strike activity and other forms of mass struggle.

As the class domination of the bourgeoisie took ever firmer root and the reformist influence in the Scandinavian labour movement grew, the communist parties found themselves up against serious problems.

The Communist Party of Sweden (SKP) experienced two serious splits during this period. Confronted by the temporary defeat of the revolutionary proletarian movement in Western Europe, the old leaders of the party (Zeth Höglund and Fredrik Ström) showed signs of liquidationism and confusion. Höglund and his supporters tended to attach too much importance to work within parliament and to underestimate mass struggle: they objected to the basic principles of the Comintern organisation. In August 1924 the Höglund-Ström group left the Comintern and reassumed their party's old name—the Social Democratic Left Party of Sweden. In 1926 it merged with the Social Democratic Party. The Communist Party, which was still affiliated to the Comintern, was led by K. Kilbom, H. Sillen, O. Samuelsson and others. The new leadership quickly removed all traces of the 1924 split and during the second half of the 1920s the party scored major successes. Its membership rose from 7,900 in 1925 to 18,000 by the autumn of 1928.¹ In the 1928 elections the Communist Party won over 150,000 votes (6.4 per cent) and won eight seats in the Lower House, thus doubling its representation in parliament.²

The party was in the process of transforming itself into a mass party when it was hit by a new crisis. The period of "prosperity" had made it easier for reformist ideas to take root, and not only among the Social Democrats. Opportunist trends also appeared in the SKP. The secretary of the party, Kilbom, put forward the concept that Swedish capitalism was "unique", thereby advocating the idea of the alleged possibility for capitalism to evolve into socialism.³ Kilbom and his supporters saw no difference between unity of the labour and union movements and agreements "at the top" or with social democratic leaders. They thus produced a drop in the support of the influential left opposition within the unions (Unity Committee) justi-

¹ *Zenit*, No. 23, 1971, p. 54.

² K. Kilbom, *Cirkeln slutet. Ur mitt livs äventyr III*, Stockholm, 1955, p. 19.

³ O. V. Chernysheva, *The Labour Movement in Sweden on the Eve of the Second World War (1929-1939)*, Moscow, 1971, p. 27 (in Russian).

fying this by saying that the Committee had caused the displeasure of the reformist union leaders. The Linderot-Sillen group which represented the Marxist-Leninist core of the party opposed this capitulationist position.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern which had supported Linderot's group recommended that an open discussion be held and a congress convened to draw conclusions from the ideas put forward. Since the Kilbom-Samuelsson group did not expect to receive majority support in an open discussion, they decided to indulge in splitting tactics. In October 1929 Linderot's comrades-in-arms were expelled from the SKP. Linderot's and Sillen's consistent supporters now made up the core of the Communist Party—the Swedish section of the Comintern.

In the second half of the 1920s grim struggle emerged within the Communist Party of Norway to combat right-wing opportunists. The most difficult situation of all was that which took shape in the Communist Party of Denmark (DKP). The leaders of that party had been infected by the liquidationist mood of the right-wing opportunists. In 1929 the executive committee of the Comintern appealed to the DKP in an Open Letter to put a stop to this inner crisis. After a group of the leaders had moved over to the DSP the Communist Party was led by Aksel Larsen and Marie Nielsen.

Despite these setbacks the communist parties of Scandinavia made a valuable contribution to the consolidation of the labour movement. It was in the trade unions that the Scandinavian Communists scored their greatest successes. The influence of the Communists grew much stronger in the Swedish unions: 20 per cent of the workers who were members of the Central Swedish Trade Unions Confederation (LS) supported the Communists. The SKP enjoyed a majority in the two largest unions of the metal-workers in Göteborg and Stockholm. In 1929 on the initiative of the Communists a nation-wide Workers' Trade Union Conference was held, at which 100,000 working people were represented from 477 different trade union organisations. A Committee of Unity was set up in which the leading role was that of the Communists.¹ The revolutionary opposition in the trade union movement in Denmark under the leadership of the DKP concentrated on drawing new "independent" workers' organisations into the Council of Danish Trade Unions and launching the trade union movement on the path of class struggle. In Norway the revolutionary opposition in the trade unions was supported by approximately a third of the 93,000-strong army of organised workers.² In 1927 the revolutionary opposition in the trade unions in

¹ *Zenit*, No. 23, 1971, pp. 61-63.

² *The International Trade-Union Movement in 1924-1927. Report of the Executive Office to the 4th Profintern Congress*, p. 215.

Oslo evolved into a political organisation—the United Party of the Working Class. This organisation embraced Communists, workers with no former political affiliations, and representatives of the left wing of the Norwegian Workers' Party.

The communist parties of Scandinavia worked tirelessly to establish friendly contacts between the workers of their own countries and the world's first socialist state.

One of the most important achievements of the Communists in that period was the strengthening of their ties with the masses. Although the Scandinavian communist parties were relatively small, they played a leading role in organising mass action by the working people.

In Sweden at that time the highest figures for working days lost through strikes were 2,560,000 in 1925 and 4,835,000 for 1928.¹ Large-scale action was also undertaken by workers who were not organised in unions. In 1927, for instance, these workers accounted for 38 per cent of the strikers.² In 1926 a long strike battle was waged in a small town called Stripa. In 1928 the miners of Norbotten were on strike for six months in a show of solidarity for workers in Central Sweden who had been dismissed after a lock-out. In the same year the SKP appealed to the workers to form a "united front against the laws" proposing that joint action should be organised for all working people against the legislation being prepared by the Ekman government that was contrary to the interests of the workers. Counteraction by reformist workers' leaders reduced the effectiveness of the campaign against these new laws, which came into operation from January 1, 1929.

In the mid-1920s in Denmark the total number of workers who went on strike or who were locked out was over 100,000.³ The most famous strike of that period was the strike of the transport workers that lasted for sixteen days: it was organised by the Danish Union of Unskilled Workers. As a result of that dispute which disrupted the export of agricultural produce, employers were obliged to ease the pressure to which they had been subjecting the working people.

In Norway in 1924 a number of large strikes were organised, sparked off by factory-owners' plans to cut wages. Particularly significant were the "unofficial" strikes, i.e., those which were an infringement of collective agreements. A total of 63,100 workers took part in open clashes with employers. As a result of strikes and lock-outs 5,200,000 working days were lost.⁴

¹ *Statistisk årsbok för Sverige. 1929*, Stockholm, 1929, p. 227; *Statistisk årsbok för Sverige. 1932*, Stockholm, 1932, p. 242.

² *Under världspartiets fana. Teser och resolutioner antagna av Sveriges kommunistiska partis (sektion av Komintern) åttonde kongress 30 nov—2 des. 1929*, Stockholm, 1930, p. 58.

³ *H. Karlsson, Dansk arbejderbevaegelse 1871-1939*, Copenhagen, 1975, p. 28.

⁴ *E. Lorenz, Arbejderbevegelsens historie, Vol. 2*, p. 213.

In *Finland* in the period 1924-1928 the GNP rose by 47.7 per cent. Real wages for industrial workers, although higher than before the war, were still some of the lowest in Europe.

After establishing their dictatorship after victory in the civil war the Finnish bourgeoisie could not, however, shake off the fear that it had experienced in the workers' revolution of 1918.

The political life of the country was unstable. During the first ten years after the revolution there were fourteen different governments at the country's helm. During a single year (starting in December 1926) there was a Social Democratic government in power led by Väinö Tanner. Like the bourgeois governments, this one, too, pursued policies in the interests of the big capital, subjected Communists and other participants in the revolutionary movement to harassment, and made short shrift of members of the ruling party who made so bold as to voice any opposition. In foreign policy Tanner steered an anti-Soviet course.

Although there was still a bourgeois-democratic regime in the country, the ruling circles frequently had recourse to direct violence against the working people. The Communist Party of Finland (SKP) was still banned, left trends in the trade unions were suppressed and also in the women's, youth, sporting and other associations within the working-class movement.

Despite this harassment the SKP successfully continued its search for new forms of work among the masses. The party's efforts to engage in legal political activity were concentrated in local workers' organisations, electoral committees, educational, sporting and other associations. Through such bodies the SKP managed among other things to take part in the publication of a national political newspaper *Gazette of Workers' Organisations* which came out six times a week. An illustrated journal for workers was also put out, *East and West*, and a journal for young people entitled *Flame*.

The policy of joint action, which the Communist Party consistently pursued, helped to strengthen the influence of the trade union organisations. The Communists succeeded in retaining a single trade union body—the Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK). The struggle between right and left trends ended in a strengthening of the influence enjoyed by the left. At the SAK Congress held in spring 1926 75 per cent of the elected delegates were left and only 25 per cent from the Social Democrats,¹ and at the next Congress in May 1929 the left already enjoyed the support of 80 per cent of the delegates. At the same time there was a considerable rise in the membership of the SAK to be observed. While in 1926 it had more than 62,000 members, by 1929 this figure had risen to 90,000.

¹ From the *History of the Communist Party of Finland*, Moscow, 1960, p. 62 (in Russian).

The influence of the Communists and the left socialist forces was spreading all the time. In the parliamentary elections of 1924 the socialist electoral alliance of workers and small-scale farmers that had been set up by the Communists won over 90,000 votes and gained 18 seats. In 1927 the same alliance won 109,000 votes and 20 seats in parliament, and finally in 1929 it won over 128,000 votes and 23 seats.

Mass action by the working class was on the increase as well, in support of both economic and political demands. In the period 1924-1927 220 strikes were organised, involving a total of 29,600 workers. Most of these strikes by the working class ended in victory. 1927 was the year marked by a general strike of metal-workers which began in response to the announcement of a lock-out at the shipyards in Turku. The strikers demanded higher wages. The fight lasted thirty weeks and ended in victory thanks to the tenacity of the Finnish workers and the international help that was forthcoming from the working people of other countries. More than half the eight million marks received by the strikers from abroad had been collected by Soviet metal-workers. In 1928 the number of strikers was twice as high as it had been the year before, reaching 27,000. The large-scale strikes by the workers from the ports and the rubber industry were distinguished by great persistence on the part of the workers. Their struggle lasted nearly a year. Signs that the reserves accumulated thanks to capitalist stabilisation were beginning to run short were multiplying all the time.

THE WORKING CLASS IN THE USA, CANADA, JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA

Bourgeois circles in the USA optimistically referred to the capitalist stabilisation as the beginning of the era of "eternal prosperity" for American capitalism. Indeed, during the decade 1920-1930 the national revenue of the USA almost doubled. At the same time real wages virtually remained unchanged.¹ The working people were clearly being robbed of the fruits of the "prosperity" that they had created through their labour, although the real wages of workers in America were still far higher than those of workers in Western Europe. The relatively high standard of living in the United States was widely exploited by the bourgeois ideologists as proof of the advantages of the "free enterprise" system. In the name of "free labour", free from "encroachments" by the trade unions, a campaign to propagate the "open shop" was launched, which was aimed at doing away with trade unions. Contracts were legalised containing a clause

¹ *Recent History of the Labour Movement in the USA*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 135 (in Russian).

obliging workers not to join a union, and actively forcing the company unions upon them. All manifestations of social protest were clamped down on with great cruelty. The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti exemplified the extent to which workers in American society were robbed of their rights.

Through political pressure on the working class the ruling circles succeeded in bringing about a sharp drop in the workers' mass struggle and above all in strikes. In the period 1924-1926 the number of strikes and those taking part in them was only a third of what it had been in 1918-1920. Yet strike battles continued: on average about 500,000 workers went on strike every year.¹

The coal-mining areas were the main scene of class battles. In September 1925 150,000 miners from anthracite pits protested against violations of the collective agreement that had been concluded with the mine-owners a year before. In April 1927 a large strike began in the mines in ten different States.

The left wing of the United Mine Workers of America proposed that the following demands be put forward: a five-day working week and a six-hour working day; the setting up of a welfare fund for the unemployed; the elimination of arbitration. Despite opposition by the reformist leaders of the miners' union, close on 175,000 miners were on strike for more than 15 months in support of these demands.² In the course of the strike new grass-roots trade union organisations of the miners sprang up that were led by members of the left wing.

In their struggle against the strikers the coal companies often made use of the police and strike-breakers. Around seventy thousand families of the strikers were evicted from their lodgings which belonged to the mine-owners in the depth of winter. The unlawful behaviour of the mine-owners fanned public opinion against them. In early 1928 a Senate Committee was set up to investigate the situation in the coal mines. The Committee was obliged to acknowledge that in this area of the strike the coal companies had instituted a reign of terror and civic liberties were being abused.³ However, no real help was given to the strikers and the mine-owners succeeded eventually in crushing the strike.

Large strikes also swept through the textile industry, in which working conditions were also very grim. The position of the textile workers in the South was particularly bad. The level of union organisation for the workers there was very low, since the factory-owners flouted union rights. Leaders of the United Textile Workers Union pursued a collaborationist policy, turning their back on strike action.

¹ Ibid., p. 150.

² *The American Labor Year Book 1929*, New York, 1929, p. 137.

³ Ibid., pp. 137-38.

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This meant that strikes in textile factories as a rule began spontaneously and in defiance of the trade union leadership.

In 1926-1927 workers from the wool-mills of Passaic came out on strike. They demanded the retention of existing wages, the introduction of a 40-hour working week and the recognition of union rights. In the course of the strike there emerged a new trade union organisation which, however, was not recognised by the United Textile Workers Union. Leaders of the American Federation of Labour (AFL) demanded that Communists be excluded from the leadership of the new union. The police used tear-gas to disperse the pickets and rallies, and over 200 workers were arrested and beaten up. The Vice Governor of the State banned the strike. Yet the workers held their ground: the communist newspaper *Daily Worker* called upon all workers' organisations to "make the fight of the Passaic workers their own, to support them financially by contribution to their strike and relief fund".¹ Supervised by the leaders of the left wing of the trade unions collections of food and money were made, soup-kitchens were opened for the strikers and their families. The leadership of the AFL was also obliged to give help to the strikers. The resistance of the factory-owners was eventually broken: they granted the workers the right to join unions and reintroduced wages at their former level.²

In 1929 textile workers from the states of Tennessee, South and North Carolina also went on strike. The dispute in Laurie was particularly grim. The Communists and Trade Union Educational League played an active part in leading the struggle. The strike was crushed with the help of detachments of the National Guard and the American Legion. The organisers of the strike were arrested on false evidence and sent to trial. Only protest rallies against illegal prosecution saved the strike leaders from the death penalty.

Yet the advance of the trade union movement lagged behind the level of economic struggle achieved by the working people. In the United States more success was achieved than in other countries in foisting "yellow" company unions on the workers: by the end of the 1920s the membership of such unions had reached 1,500,000, or 40 per cent of all organised workers.

Most workers organised in unions came under the auspices of the AFL whose leadership was under the influence of the bourgeois political parties. Trade-union leaders turned to the "highest strategy of labour" that had been elaborated by the bourgeois economist Thomas Carver. According to this concept the unions should endeavour to achieve cooperation between workers and management, which

¹ *The Daily Worker*, April 14, 1926.

² I. Marks, *The History of One Big Strike in the United States*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, pp. 34-35 (in Russian).

by furthering growth in production and higher productivity would automatically, according to Carver, lead to better wages.¹ The AFL leadership approved in principle the propagation of the idea that wages depended on the profitability of production. As a result of negotiations between entrepreneurs and union leaders representing the railwaymen, an agreement was reached banning strikes on the railways. This agreement provided the basis for the Watson-Parker Law passed in 1926.

The left wing of the trade union movement was represented by the Trade Union Educational League, in which the Communists played an active role. In December 1927 League membership totalled 300,000 (of the total AFL membership of 3,500,000). The League persistently opposed the policy of compromise pursued by the AFL. In September 1928 a congress of left trade unions was held in Pittsburgh, which was attended by over 700 delegates: it announced the formation of a progressive national union of miners. The congress declaration exposed the policy of compromise pursued by the AFL leaders and set itself the task of organising class struggle among the miners.² The influence of this revolutionary trend was, however, insufficient to undermine the domination of the reformist union leaders.

Given that the majority of workers in the USA were under the influence of the bourgeois parties, the ruling circles did not show the same enthusiasm for collaboration with the Socialists as had been so common among the European bourgeoisie.

The leaders of the Socialist Party (SP USA) accepted the bourgeois theory of America as being "unique" and renounced the principles of class struggle. At the Congress of the SP USA in 1928 a clause was removed from the Party Charter which stated that a condition for party membership should be acceptance of class struggle. As a result the SP USA isolated itself from the solution of major social and political problems and its influence declined. By the end of the period of stabilisation the membership figure had dropped to 7,000 (as opposed to 104,000 in 1919). At the presidential elections of 1928 the candidate for the Socialist Party only polled 267,000 votes (0.73 per cent of the total) as against 920,000 (3.5 per cent of the total) in 1920. When describing the situation in the Socialist Party during the years of the partial stabilisation of capitalism its leader Morris Hillquit acknowledged that the mood of apathy and insecurity paralysed their efforts.

The powerful pressure exerted on the American working class by bourgeois policies and ideology created major obstacles for the advance of the Communist Party of the United States. The ideological

¹ *AFL, Proceedings...*, 1925, p. 35.

² *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, No. 11 (94), November 1928, pp. 630-31.

and organisational consolidation of its ranks proceeded against a background of grim struggle against the opportunist grouping led by Ludwig Lore, which opposed the reorganisation of the Party according to the territorial and production-based principle and which chose to ignore the role of working farmers as allies of the proletariat.¹ The Party also waged a struggle against the opportunist faction led by Jay Lovestone and John Pepper who propagated the notion that American capitalism was "unique". The Trotskyite group of James Cannon opposed the tactics of a united front and demanded that the Communists leave the reformist trade unions.

In 1928-1929 right-wing opportunists and Trotskyites were expelled from the Party and it became more close-knit. An important contribution to the struggle against the ultra-left and the right-wing deviationists, and to the formation of the Party's Leninist core was that made by William Foster. In the second half of the 1920s the Party was reorganised on the basis of factory cells and territorial sections. Although membership figures were still small (14,000 in 1929) its work among the masses was now more effective. Apart from the central newspaper *The Daily Worker* founded in 1924, 27 factory newspapers and magazines were now being put out.

The Communists actively participated in the organisation of strikes by workers from the coal, textile and clothing industries, in the organisation of new progressive trade unions and in the movement to defend civil rights and liberties.

Paying tribute to the brave stand of the Communists during the years of capitalist stabilisation, William Foster wrote: "This resolute fight against the A. F. of L. class collaboration policies ... constitutes one of the most effective pages in the history of the Communist Party of the United States."²

During the period of the relative stabilisation of capitalism the economic development of *Canada* was advancing rapidly. Changes in the technical and economic structure of the country and the consolidation of the monopolies' domination meant that Canadian capitalism had now finally entered the monopolist stage. After the crisis of 1920-1923 the country entered a period of high economic prosperity. The broad expansion of American capital mainly in the form of direct investment had lent Canadian "prosperity" a certain one-sidedness and had served to accentuate still further Canada's specialisation in the extraction of raw materials and her orientation towards the US market.

This economic recovery brought down unemployment figures, yet unemployment still remained a problem, complicated in Canada by

¹ *Recent History of the Labour Movement in the USA*, Vol. 1, p. 179.

² W. Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, New York, 1952, p. 247.

seasonal fluctuations in the demand for labour. The latest methods of labour intensification (Fordism) were imported together with American technology.

The labour movement was in a defensive mood. Strike activity was in decline particularly since the mid-1920s, and the duration of strikes was also down. The annual average was 80 strikes, involving 25,000 workers.¹ The nature of the strike movement is reflected in the reasons behind the labour disputes—against wage cuts, against the “open shop” and in support of collective agreements and the acceptance of trade unions.

The most militant detachment of the Canadian working class was that of the miners. In the 1920s they accounted for almost half the total numbers of those taking part in strikes and almost half the lost working-days. Print-workers, clothing workers, dockers, lumberjacks, etc., all went on strike as well. In the car, chemical and various other mass production industries where the system of the “open shop” predominated, and factory-owners were bitterly opposed to accepting unions and collective agreements, there were virtually no strikes.²

The organised struggle of the working class was complicated by a number of objective factors: the scattered distribution of factories over large areas, the as yet incomplete consolidation of the working class from within, stemming in part from the fact that it was made up to a large extent of immigrants all speaking different languages. Among the subjective factors the most important was the low level of organisation. During the 1920s the Canadian union movement only had 300,000 members which represented not more than 12 per cent of hired workers.³ Furthermore these organised detachments of the working class were isolated from each other. There also existed a number of international work-shop unions which at one and the same time were affiliated to the AFL and also to the Trade Union and Workers' Congress of Canada, to the Catholic syndicates uniting the French-Canadian workers in Quebec and independent trade unions set up by the different national communities. Most organised workers belonged to work-shop unions. These organisations which brought together skilled workers confined themselves to “practical unionism” and tended to engage in class collaboration. The spread of sophisticated methods of exploitation, propaganda of bourgeois nationalism and the theory of America as a case unto itself prepared the ground for opportunism to take root in the unions and for reformist illusions to infect the labour movement.

¹ *Strikes and Lockouts in Canada 1969*, Ottawa, 1971, p. 12.

² S. M. Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-1966*, Ottawa, 1968, pp. 192-213.

³ *Labour Organisations in Canada 1970*, Ottawa, 1970, p. XIII.

The needs and objectives of the labour movement were defined most consistently of all by the Communist Party of Canada (this name had been adopted by the Workers' Party of Canada at its 3rd Congress in 1924) and the left forces in the union movement. The CPC carried out a good deal of work to consolidate the left wing in the trade unions and to propagate the need for unity of the trade unions. At the same time it was demonstrating the advantages of production-based organisation and the vital need to encourage independent political action of the working class and defended the autonomy of the Canadian sections in inter-national trade union organisations. The Trade Union Educational League led by Tim Buck and its newspaper *Left Wing* played an important part in this work. This policy served to enhance the influence of the Communist Party in the trade unions.

Another positive step was the formation in 1927 of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour which brought together a number of trade unions representing the different national groups: the congress outlined its immediate task of organising production-based unions and stressed the need for political action. The reformist leaders of the new trade union body, however, was not in a position to carry out these plans. Unlike the Communist Party which urged its members to set up a single trade union centre in the country the All-Canadian Congress of labour adopted a sectarian stand in relation to other trade union centres.¹

In the first half of the 1920s the rudiments of a united political front of the working class were beginning to take shape. Various local workers' parties and local trade union branches which traditionally had always taken part in election campaigns began to coordinate their activities in the provinces and the towns, and on a national scale within the framework of the federal Canadian Labor Party (CLP). Representatives of the CPC, which in 1922 had become part of the Canadian Labor Party (CLP), were occupying prominent positions in the provincial sections of the CLP in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and a number of other provinces. Tim Buck pointed out that the continued development of that unity "would have made the organised labor movement an important parliamentary force in Canada".² The offensive against left-wing force in the labour movement in Canada and the persecution of Communists which began in the second half of the 1920s undermined the Canadian Labor Party. The right wing of the Trade Union and Workers' Congress of Canada and the trade union bureaucrats from AFL persuaded dozens of

¹ O. S. Soroko-Tsyupa, *The Labour Movement in Canada (1929-1939)*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 67-97 (in Russian).

² Tim Buck, *Thirty Years 1922-1952. The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada*, Toronto 1952, p. 33.

trade unions, with members in both Canada and the United States, to drop out of the CLP and they were followed by moderate centrist and social democratic groupings. By the beginning of 1929 all provincial sections of the CLP had ceased to operate.

In *Japan* the stabilisation of capitalism led to a new distribution of power among the ruling groups of the country. For eight years of so-called "constitutional rule" the Prime Ministership alternated between the leaders of the two main bourgeois-landowners' parties Ken-seikai and Seiyukai.

The Japanese bourgeoisie, afraid of the development of a revolutionary movement, did not, however, lead a consistent struggle against the monarchy. While advocating a modest programme of greater political freedoms, the bourgeois parties at the same time supported reactionary monarchist circles, who demanded greater political repression of the activities of the working class. In May 1925 the reactionary Public Order Act was adopted, thus giving the government extensive powers for the suppression of the workers' and democratic movements.

The workers' lack of political experience and harsh government reprisals, directed primarily against the vanguard of the proletariat, created serious obstacles to the development of the working-class movement. Mass arrests and killings of Communists, Socialists and other activists belonging to the workers' movement, acts of terror and reprisals by the police seriously harmed the movement, creating doubt and uncertainty among some of its leaders. Even within the Communist Party of Japan certain defeatist attitudes were in evidence. Its leaders, Yamakawa, Akamatsu and others, advocated the dissolution of the Communist Party, whose existence they considered premature, and proposed that it should be replaced by a mass legal workers' and peasants' party (Yamakawaism). In February 1924 Yamakawa and his supporters adopted the resolution on the dissolution of the Communist Party. The revolutionary movement lost its combat leadership¹.

Taking advantage of the weakness of the left-wing movement caused by the arrests of Communists and the voluntary dissolution of the Communist Party of Japan, the right-wing trade union leaders went into attack. In February 1924 at the regular Congress of the Japanese Federation of Labour (Sodomei), then the largest trade union organisation in Japan, they presented a draft declaration on a "change of course", which would confine trade union struggle to narrow syndicalist aims. The right-wing leaders insisted on a complete dissociation from the revolutionary movement and on the expulsion of revolutionary elements from the trade unions.

¹ 50 years of the Communist Party of Japan, Tokyo, 1975, p. 32 (in Japanese).

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The new course of the right-wing leadership of Sodomei was opposed by the left-wing trade unions of the Kansai region. Local trade unions opposed to the new course formed a rival organisation (Kukushin Domei).

In May 1925 the right-wing leaders of Sodomei, seeing their position challenged, expelled 32 trade unions belonging to the left opposition. The expelled unions formed their own organisation—the Japanese Council of Trade Unions, Hyogikai, in May 1925. Thus the trade union movement in Japan came to be split into two factions with Sodomei on the right and Hyogikai on the left. Subsequently, late in 1926, a number of trade unions protesting against expulsions from Sodomei but not wishing to join Hyogikai, had left Sodomei and formed their own Centrist group—the Japanese Trade Union Congress (Nihon Rodo Kumiai Domei).

The Communists established close links with the trade unions and spoke against the split in Sodomei, stressing the need for the maintenance of unity among the trade unions and for the mobilisation of the broad masses against the divisive policies of the right.

In March 1926, the legal Workers' and Peasants' Party (Rodo Nominto) was formed, being dominated in its leadership by right-wing representatives of the Japanese Social Democrats. However, already in October of the same year Sodomei resigned from Rodo Nominto after finding itself in the minority over the question of admitting to party membership of the members of left-wing organisations (the so-called "open doors" question), and on December 5, 1926 created its own Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshoto). Freed of right-wing elements, the Workers' and Peasants' Party, headed by the eminent scholar Oyama Ikuo, adopted a left-wing stance and engaged in effective activity.

In December 1926, the Communist Party of Japan was reconstituted. However, at a time when many of its leading activists were in prison the CPJ, in reaction to Yamakawaism fell under the sway of left-wing opportunists, followers of Fukumotoism named after its founder, Fukumoto Kazuo.¹

Fukumoto saw a revolutionary party as a narrow and closed union of the intelligentsia, of men "thinking in Marxist terms". Underrating the importance of practical work Fukumoto maintained that theoretical work alone, by forming "Marxist consciousness", could create a revolutionary party. Even though Fukumoto and Yamakawa represented different ideological tendencies, the thinking of both was affected by their inability to apply Marxism-Leninism to Japanese reality.

The Communist International helped greatly in the overcoming

¹ *50 years of the Communist Party of Japan*, p. 40.

of these deviations. In July 1927 the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in cooperation with CPJ representatives Watanabe, Tokuda and Fukumoto, adopted theses on the Japanese question which were then unanimously approved by an extended plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPJ in December 1927. The theses rejected both Yamakawaism and Fukumotoism as deviations incompatible with the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The theses pointed out that Yamakawaism led to the dilution of the class party of the proletariat in trade unions and in a mass workers' and peasants' party. Fukumotoism, on the other hand, exaggerated the significance of the theoretical struggle, giving insufficient attention to the mass revolutionary movement, thus leading to the Party's separation and isolation from the masses.¹

The theses ended the discussions within the Party and indicated the way forward for the organisational and ideological strengthening of the Party. For the first time they gave a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the specificities of Japanese capitalism, and defined the character of the forthcoming revolution as bourgeois-democratic with a trend towards swift transformation into a socialist revolution. The main tasks of the first stage of the revolution were defined as the democratisation of the Japanese state, the abolition of the monarchy, the implementation of an agrarian reform, etc.

Armed with the programme of action the CPJ began rebuilding its organisations according to the production principle, creating party cells at industrial enterprises, in institutions and universities, activating propaganda among organised workers, in peasant unions, in student and intellectuals' organisations. In February 1928 the illegal newspaper of the Central Committee of the CPJ *Sekki* (Red Flag) was founded.

In February 1928 the first general elections were held. As an illegal party the Communist Party could not campaign under its own name, but it relied on the support of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, of the trade unions, of the women's, youth and artistic organisations which were influenced by it. In its election campaign the CPJ advocated the liquidation of the monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic, voting rights for all men and women above the age of eighteen, freedom of speech, assembly and organisation, the eight-hour working day, the abolition of private ownership of large landed estates, the struggle against the threat of an imperialist war, the granting of independence to Japanese colonies, etc.²

In spite of the complicated situation proletarian parties were suc-

¹ I. I. Kovalenko, *Outlines of the History of the Communist Movement in Japan before the Second World War*, Moscow, 1979, Appendix, pp. 231, 233 (in Russian).

² 50 years of the Communist Party of Japan, p. 47.

cessful in the elections. Of the 500 thousand votes given by the electorate to the 8 left-wing parties yielding candidates, 200 thousand votes went to the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

Naturally enough the 4.7 per cent of the total vote which went to all workers' parties could do little to undermine the position of the bourgeois parties in parliament. However, the unexpected political activation of workers frightened the ruling class and again led to extensive repression. On March 15, 1928 the Tanaka government ordered mass arrests of Communists and their sympathisers. More than a 1,000 people were arrested. The Workers' and Peasants' Party, the Japanese Trade Union Council, the Young Communist League and other organisations influenced by the CPJ were banned. In June 1928 a special Imperial decree added further punishments for membership of the CPJ to the Public Order Act, the death penalty and life imprisonment among them. A secret political police was established. These measures dealt a heavy blow to the workers' and democratic movement in Japan.

The working class in *Australia* was formed from among English immigrants. The main position in the workers' movement belonged to the Australian Labour Party (ALP). The working-class movement was also influenced by political émigrés who brought ideas of scientific socialism into the country.

The Australian Communist Party (ACP) was formed in 1922. During the period of stabilisation the Communists carried out the difficult work of educating the workers in a revolutionary spirit. The ACP supported trade union initiatives towards uniting the working class in the struggle for increases in wages, a shorter working day and improved conditions of work.

The ACP was opposed to a workshop-based fragmentation of the trade union movement, to syndicalism and reformist tendencies, and it led an energetic struggle for the creation of a single trade union centre for Australian workers. In 1927 at the all-Australian Trade Union Congress the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) was formed, with a membership of about 400 thousand.¹ The leadership of the ACTU included representatives of the Labour left and of the Communists. The creation of the ACTU merged separate small trade unions on a production basis, led to the creation of single industry-based trade unions and increased the organisation of the workers. But the executive committee of the ACTU was dominated by reformist leaders. The trade union movement also contained a revolutionary minority (numbering 130 thousand in 1928) which joined the Profintern.

The Communists played an active part in carrying out campaigns

¹ *The Trade Unions of Australia and Oceania*, Moscow, 1967, p. 13 (in Russian).

for the international solidarity of workers. An organisation for "Aid to fugitives from the international class war" was set up in Australia.

However, the Party's achievements were still modest. Difficulties were caused by the need to fight against the group led by J. Cavanagh, which opposed the Party's independent policy in mass workers' organisations and advocated the theory of Australia's "uniqueness". At the 9th Congress of the ACP in December 1929 J. Cavanagh and his supporters were defeated. A Marxist-Leninist nucleus was formed within the leadership of the Party, headed by J. B. Miles, L. Sharkey and R. Dixon.

PROLETARIAN SOLIDARITY

During the years of the temporary and partial stabilisation of capitalism the movement for international proletarian solidarity continued to develop, based on the support and defence of the first socialist state in the world. The growing understanding among the international proletariat of the historic significance of the creative activity of the Soviet working class was a powerful stimulus to the development of a movement of international solidarity.¹

In the second half of the 1920s the campaigns of proletarian solidarity became truly world-wide.

The world proletariat gave active support to the Chinese people in their struggle for national liberation during the revolutionary upsurge of 1925-1927. In Britain the trade union congress in September 1925 passed a resolution demanding the withdrawal of British troops from China. In September 1926 London workers held a public meeting which unanimously demanded the cessation of British military activities in China. In January 1927 the Communist Party of Great Britain, exposing the policy of the British government in China, called upon the workers to extend the network of the "Hands off China!" committees and to fight for the withdrawal of the armed forces of intervention. London workers held a public meeting on February 12, 1927 at which they demanded "the immediate withdrawal of British armed forces from Chinese territories and waters..."²

On March 22, 1927 at a public meeting in Paris the participants adopted an appeal to French soldiers and sailors. "The Chinese revolutionaries," it said, "are your comrades in the struggle! Fraternise with them against the common enemy—imperialism! Be on guard against the imperialist intervention in China!"³ On March 1, 1927

¹ For details see Chapter 1 of this volume.

² *The International Solidarity of Workers in the Struggle against Reactionary Aggression and Military Threat (1925-1927)*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 133, 268, 309, 312 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 321, 332.

the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU) declared its solidarity with the Chinese revolution by protesting "against the united aggression of the imperialists of Europe and the USA, against violations of Chinese territory".

A demonstration against the actions of British imperialists in China was held in Hamburg on April 17, 1927. The Profintern made an appeal to the proletariat of the world on April 15, 1927. The appeal ended with the words: "Demand the withdrawal of armed forces from China! Long live the workers of Shanghai! Long live the Chinese revolution!"¹

A broad movement of proletarian solidarity developed in connection with the 1926 General Strike in Britain. Two weeks before the strike the Profintern suggested to the Amsterdam International that joint campaigns should be organised in support of the British miners. When the Amsterdam leaders rejected this proposal the Profintern made a proposal to the General Council of the British TUC suggesting a convocation of an "*international conference of all workers' professional organisations wishing to aid the miners*".²

This proposal also failed to find support. Help from the proletariat of the world could have become one of the most important factors in the victory of the miners, especially in view of the stubborn resistance of the British bourgeoisie. This was clear also to the leadership of the British trade unions. Already at the beginning of the General Strike the General Council of the TUC addressed an appeal to the Amsterdam International requesting "any possible help—financial or otherwise". The appeal stressed: "It is particularly important to do everything in your power to prevent the export and loading of coal on British ships."³ But the IFTU in effect did no more than allocate one thousand pounds to the General Council.

The position of the Amsterdam International made the decision of the General Council of the TUC as regards the ending of the strike easier. As soon as this decision was taken, the IFTU announced the cessation of international collection in aid of the British workers. The question of aid to the miners, who continued their lonely fight against the bosses for another seven months, was passed on to the IFTU's international section of miners' trade unions. Their help turned out to be almost non-existent, amounting to just 3.5 per cent of all international contributions to the British miners' fund. The remaining sums had been collected by workers from different countries on the initiative of revolutionary trade unions.⁴

Revolutionary trade unions adopted a different stance towards the

¹ Ibid., p. 357.

² *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, No. 5 (64), May 1926, p. 378.

³ P. V. Gurovich, *The General Strike in Britain, 1926*, pp. 185-86.

⁴ For greater details, see Chapter 1 of this volume.

general strike in Britain. Even before the strike began, on April 30, 1926, the Profintern called upon its national sections to begin a movement of solidarity with the British miners. Its slogan was: "Not one kilo of coal to Britain!"¹

The General Strike in Britain was actively supported by the communist parties and revolutionary trade unions of other countries. Sections of the Comintern advocated the organisation of international aid to the British workers, proposing that reformist organisations should join them in a united front in defence of the British miners.

The solidarity movement was led by the Soviet working class. Public expressions of solidarity with the British miners were heard in France, Germany, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and other European countries. Relief funds for the strikers were raised by workers in the USA, India and China. In Japan, the movement of solidarity with the British miners found support among the alliance of the left trade unions, the miners' union and the Trade Union Congress of Eastern Japan.

The General Council of the TUC received telegrams from all over the world with news of financial contributions and other measures in support of the British General Strike. The newspaper *Labour Monthly* later wrote: "In a day and a night, it seemed, the supreme battle-cry of the working class, 'Workers of the world, unite!', had been translated into actual living fact."² The Executive Committee of the Comintern stressed the enormous significance of the international support for the British strike. This experience confirmed previously applied forms of expression of proletarian solidarity, proving their importance not only in conditions of revolutionary mobilisation, but also in conditions of the temporary retreat of the revolution. A new and most important factor in proletarian solidarity appeared with special clarity: the workers of the USSR were shown to be loyal allies of the world proletariat in its struggle against the advance of capital.

An indication of the strength of proletarian solidarity came with the movement for the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti. Mass demonstrations against the unjust verdict of the ruling class court in the USA were held in the USSR, Canada, Britain, Germany, France, Sweden and Latin America. The workers of Britain held 158 demonstrations and protest meetings in August 1927. In Berlin, in front of the US embassy, German workers spent several days expressing their outrage at the planned evil execution. Thousands of people besieged the embassies and consulates of the USA in other world capi-

¹ *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, No. 5 (64), May 1926, p. 378.

² *The Labour Monthly*, Vol. 8, No. 7, July 1926, p. 441.

tals.¹ The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti caused a wave of protest among workers of the world, with meetings of mourners in many places. "The international protest against the infamous execution of Sacco and Vanzetti," wrote *The Communist International*, "grew into a campaign of extraordinary world significance. For many years no campaign for international solidarity has grown to this gigantic extent. The movement became really international in the literal sense of the word.... Not only countries but whole continents were gripped by the movement."²

The protest of the international proletariat against reactionary aggression was closely linked with the struggle against the military threat.

In the 1920s the conditions necessary for the exclusion of war from the life of society still did not exist. Nonetheless the creation of the first socialist state, which could from then on stand in opposition to the capitalist world and carry out a policy of peaceful coexistence, meant that the fight for peace underwent a qualitative change. The growing communist movement was becoming an important force which consistently opposed the military threat. The struggle of the working class against the threat of war was linked indissolubly by the Communists with the struggle for the defence of the first socialist country and with support for national liberation movement in the colonies.

Special attention to the struggle against the threat of imperialist war was given at the 6th Comintern Congress.³ It called upon Communists to organise the mass struggle against the military threat, linking it with the everyday demands of the working class, and urged them to coordinate anti-military revolutionary activities in different countries so as to give an international character to the struggle against the threat of imperialist war. The congress announced that the struggle against the military threat was inseparable from the need to defend the Soviet Union. The congress also established the 1st of August as the day of struggle against imperialist war.

The great achievement of the 6th Congress of the Comintern lay in the fact that it stated the need for the mobilisation of the masses against the threat of imperialist war and founded the anti-war movement on the idea of a united workers' front. Unlike the Social Democrats who relied completely on the pacifist declarations by the bourgeois-democratic governments and on the activity of the League of Nations, the Communists saw that war could be prevented by the

¹ *The International Solidarity of Workers in the Struggle Against Reactionary Aggression and Military Threat (1925-1927)*, pp. 428-38.

² *The Communist International*, Vol. 4, No. 15, London, October 15, 1927. p. 290.

³ *The 6th Comintern Congress. Verbatim Report*, Issue 2.

growth of the power of the socialist state and by a mass anti-war struggle through the unification of all socialist and anti-imperialist forces. The Communists indissolubly linked the idea of the prevention of war with the need for defence of the Soviet Union, the bulwark of peace and socialism.

During the years of the partial stabilisation of capitalism the struggle of the working class against the military threat did not develop sufficiently because of the disunity of the workers' movement. But already in those years the communist parties acquired important positive experience for the organisation of anti-war activities by the proletariat of different countries.

In 1927, the increasing number of anti-Soviet provocations on the part of Britain and other imperialist states caused mass demonstrations and protest meetings. Movements of friendship with the USSR were born in a number of countries. In November 1927, on the occasion of the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, a congress of the friends of the USSR was convoked in Moscow. 957 delegates from over 30 countries participated. A significant proportion (22 per cent) of the delegates were social democratic workers. The participants of the congress adopted the Appeal against imperialist war. They addressed the workers with a call for the defence of the achievements of the October Revolution and for the defence of the USSR as the bulwark of socialism. The participants declared that the workers of the world would view a war against the USSR as a crime against humanity.¹

In accordance with the decision of the 6th Comintern Congress in 1929 the Communists began preparations for the first international day of struggle against the threat of imperialist war. In May 1929 a conference of 13 communist parties was held in Brussels. It decided that an international anti-war campaign should be held on August 1 of the same year. The 10th Plenary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (July 1929) stressed that this international action of the working class must be closely linked with the economic and political struggle of the working class and must take a revolutionary direction.²

On August 1, 1929 the working people of many countries carried out successful demonstrations against imperialist war and for the defence of the USSR, laying the foundations of international campaigns of workers for the prevention of imperialist wars and in defence of the Soviet Union. At the basis of the new movement lay the idea of a united workers' front. The anti-war campaigns of the second half of the 1920s showed that the desire to make a direct link

¹ *Pravda*, November 13, 1927.

² *Outline History of the Communist International*, p. 308.

between the anti-war struggle and the task of destorying the rule of capital limited the possibilities for the involvement of the masses in the anti-war movement. By its very nature the struggle against the threat of war demanded not only the participation of the proletarian avantgarde, but also the unification of the most varied groups of the working and non-proletarian population, the articulation of broader slogans which would be comprehensible and appreciated by those groups of the population still loyal to the old bourgeois order. This was the conclusion later reached by the international communist movement. But for this conclusion to be reached it was first necessary to acquire a certain practical experience. It was in this sense that the anti-war activities of the proletarian avantgarde of the second half of the 1920s paved the way for the subsequent stage in the development of a broader democratic movement for the struggle for peace.

Chapter 5

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND THE THREAT OF WAR

THE 1929-1933 WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The 1929-1933 world economic crisis was a watershed in the capitalist world's economic and socio-political development. It had no equal in capitalist history in its impact on all aspects of social life and the whole range of class and interstate relations. The domestic contradictions in capitalist countries worsened considerably thereby polarising social and political forces.

The unusual destructive consequences of the crisis may be put down to several causes. The major one was that it erupted at the time of capitalism's general crisis. The victorious October Revolution in Russia had undermined the foundations of capitalism which was no longer the only and all-embracing world economic system. The very existence of the first ever socialist society was a powerful material and moral support for the international working class and the people of the colonies and dependencies in their struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Among the principal characteristics of the crisis that directly affected the conditions of class struggle must be listed its uncommon intensity, its universal nature (the crisis hit all capitalist countries and all economic spheres) and its duration. The Great Depression of the 1930s was cut short only by the boom in military production on the eve of World War II.

In terms of its specific manifestations in various sectors of the capitalist economy the 1929-1933 crisis is comparable to a pandemic of destruction. Just two or three years of crisis cost capitalist forces of production many hundreds of billions of dollars—far more than humanity had lost as a result of World War I.¹ The economies of many countries were put back several decades. From 1929 the index

¹ See *Thirteenth Plenum of the ECCI, Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1934, p. 4 (in Russian).

of industrial production (1913 = 100) fell to the low point of 1932 from 182.6 to 81.2 points in the USA, from 104.4 to 70.7 in Britain, from 108.3 to 51.8 in Germany, and from 144.0 to 92.0 in France.¹ The banking system was thrown into complete disarray resulting from the wave of bankruptcies. And the international monetary crisis undermined the financial position of the capitalist countries. The industrial crisis merged with the agrarian crisis, the battle for markets intensified and inter-imperialist contradictions worsened. Unemployment soared to astronomical levels. According to blatantly deflated figures issued by the International Labour Bureau of the League of Nations, the army of jobless amounted to 30 millions; and vast numbers of people worked a shortened working week.

The effect of unemployment on the status of the employed section of the working class was truly catastrophic: fear of losing one's job and seeing one's children starving struck at working people and made it easier for capitalists to launch their onslaught on the working class. Exploitation of hired labour soared to new heights. Industrial injury and the number of fatalities through accidents and catastrophes at work greatly increased. Nominal wages and real incomes of employed workers fell sharply—in some countries by as much as 40 and 50 per cent of the pre-crisis level.² There developed, even in such highly developed countries as the USA, debt-bondage and other pre-capitalist forms of exploitation, wage payment by special coupons or bonds for obtaining foodstuffs in company shops, etc.

Queues of unemployed workers wound about whole quarters for a cup of charity coffee or a bowl of soup; epidemics, starvation (despite the existence of huge unused supplies of food), mass migration, abandoned towns and workers' settlements, colonies of homeless people inhabiting miserable shanties and scavenging for scraps on city refuse dumps, surviving through hand-outs, prostitution and petty theft, the forced selling by auction of farm property, impoverishment of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the rural populace, an unchecked rise in all forms of indebtedness, emaciation, disease, semi-starved existence, shattered destinies and crippled spirits—all that lay behind the arid figures on general fall in production, the downturn in trade, the shock waves surging through the currency system, the sackings and growth in intensification of work. The absolute impoverishment of the proletariat had become a phenomenon common to all capitalist nations.

The ruination of small entrepreneurs in town and country reached

¹ See Y. S. Varga, *Present-Day Capitalism and Economic Crises. Selected Works*, Moscow, 1962, p. 38 (in Russian).

² See Y. S. Varga, *Selected Works. Economic Crises*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 264, 265, 268; V. L. Malkov, *The Labour Movement in the USA during the World Economic Crisis, 1929-1933*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 66, 67, etc. (both in Russian).

unprecedented dimensions, and immense burdens lay upon the intellectuals and white-collar workers.

Instead of the promised permanent era of prosperity and class harmony, the capitalist world had run up against unheard-of economic ruin and a sharp exacerbation of contradictions between labour and capital, and an intensification of the class struggle.

The years of the 1929-1933 economic crisis marked the beginning of a fresh upsurge in the international labour movement, a period of regrouping of forces, the testing of new ways and means of mass struggle, the organisational and ideological-political consolidation of labour organisations, the awakening to creative endeavour of entire sections of the working people who had been but politically neutral hitherto. The national liberation movement surged up again to greater heights in the oppressed and dependent countries.

The particular distinction of the mass labour movement during the world economic crisis was that it was taking place at a time when capital's greatly stepped-up attack on workers' economic and social rights and also the unchecked rise in unemployment were greatly increasing the difficulties with which those who organised and took part in strikes had to deal. Life, though, refuted the notion of the reformists that there are unsurmountable barriers in the way of such actions during an economic slump. Despite the difficulties, the strike movement did not fade away, although it also had a predominantly defensive character. The principal slogans of the workers' struggle became demands to halt wage cuts and redundancies. During three years of the crisis, as many as 18,794 strikes involving 8,515,100 participants occurred in the fifteen largest capitalist nations.¹

The struggle of the unemployed became a paramount political factor in the crisis years. Never before had it attained such enormous scope, had it taken on such an organised and purposeful character. This resulted both from the circumstances of dire poverty of the working populace, and from the selfless efforts of the left forces, above all the Communists, in mobilising people for fighting unemployment and its social consequences. Even where communist parties were small, they were able from the very onset of the crisis to head that mass movement against poverty and hunger. Thanks to that it moved forward, every year affecting ever more strongly the political situation in the capitalist world. The very slogans and demands of the movement of the unemployed—the campaign for bread, for welfare, for unemployment benefit, for setting up public work schemes, against eviction, etc.—had more than a local and individual character, they were national and class, lending a particular resonance to

¹ See K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, Moscow, 1979, p. 18 (in Russian).

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every large demonstration.¹ The movement of the unemployed played an exceptionally important role in the USA, Britain, Germany, Canada, France, Austria, Poland and Holland.

In early February 1930, members of West European communist parties proposed at a conference in Dusseldorf to make 6 March 1930 an International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment. The communist call evinced fervent response among the populace. On the appointed day the streets and squares of industrial cities in Europe and America were filled with many thousand-strong protest demonstrations and meetings against unemployment, showing that the working class had no intention of acquiescing to, nor ever would it acquiesce to the policy of the ruling classes in their endeavour to transfer the whole burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people.²

The International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment was a signal to launch fresh mass actions. Communist parties everywhere set up organisations of the unemployed that took charge of the struggle in the localities and held congresses of members of those organisations. The mass hunger marches and protest demonstrations began to spread and became a very effective form of the unemployment movement. Every day the industrial towns and workers' communities in capitalist countries witnessed stormy popular demonstrations demanding assistance from the authorities, protesting against eviction from homes, reduction in unemployment benefit, the humiliating procedure involved in the means test, and so on.

The Prague Conference of members of the communist parties of France, Britain, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland, Holland, the Scandinavian countries and Bulgaria in August 1931 played a vital part in drawing up organisation principles, ways and means of campaigning. The Conference debated the issue of the unemployment movement, exposed deficiencies in the activity of communist parties and, proceeding from accumulated experience, made a number of recommendations. It proclaimed as guiding slogan of the movement the battle to establish an all-embracing and effective state system of social insurance against unemployment, to be footed by the capitalists. It was specially stipulated that the system be extended to those elements of the petty bourgeoisie that were utterly deprived of means of subsistence owing to the economic crisis.³

Against the backdrop of the capitalist economic slump, poverty and the pauperisation of millions of working people, the intensifica-

¹ See *Theses and Resolutions of the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, New York, 1932, pp. 26-27.

² *L'Humanité*, 7 and 8 March 1930; *Die Rote Fahne*, 8 March 1930.

³ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 48, 10 September 1931, Vol. 11, p. 884; No. 56, 30 October 1931, Vol. 11, pp. 1003-1018.

tion of class antagonisms and the class struggle in the capitalist world, the successes of the Soviet Union were particularly impressive. Humanity's dream had come true in the grand achievements of the builders of socialism who had in the briefest span transformed a poor country, bled white by wars and economic ruin, into a dynamically developing state effectively ruled by its people. Even labour leaders remote from Marxism were forced to recognise that. The labour press of the whole world circulated the words of the well known figures of the British labour movement, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who had visited the Soviet Union in June 1932, "We are deeply impressed by the universal feeling of hopefulness, now absent in other countries, by the tremendous spirit of energy with which all Soviet Russia is being transformed, and by the high degree of unity in thought and action."¹

Demonstration of the advantages of existing socialism strengthened the confidence of the working people in capitalist states in the need for the revolutionary remaking of society. The courageous son of the American working class, Tom Mooney, wrote the following to the Moscow *Trud* newspaper, "As world capitalism sinks ever deeper and deeper into the quagmire of its own despair, corruption and brutal exploitation of the toilers, you, the conquerors of Czarist tyranny, the builders of a better civilisation, by your unbelievable sacrifices and unrelenting struggles, have made possible the tremendous successes in socialist construction in the Soviet Union and are a sublime inspiration to the workers everywhere. You raise the hopes of the world proletariat ever higher and higher. We are miles apart, but space means nothing—the struggle is worldwide. I am with you in spirit and with all my heart. I am with you in all your struggles. I rejoice in the success of your social revolution. I am with you unreservedly, and without equivocation."²

In the campaign for their vital interests working people everywhere came up against the vicious protective policy of the bourgeoisie. Repressive measures were backed up by an unbridled propaganda campaign using all the latest ways and means of manipulating the mass consciousness in a spirit of militant anti-radicalism, anti-communism and "class collaboration". Restrictions on political liberties and police terror combined with the whipping up of national strife, revanchist and chauvinistic emotions. The grossly distended coercive apparatus of bourgeois dictatorship took its toll, relying on numerous "volunteer" paramilitary groups of "vigilantes", "patriots", etc.

The Reichswehr in Germany blatantly intruded upon the mounting class conflicts after the summer of 1932, threatening to crush anyone

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 12, No. 30, 7 July 1932, p. 620.

² *Labor Defender*, Vol. VII, No. 11, November 1931, p. 207.

taking part in revolutionary actions with an iron fist.¹ Under the pretext of dealing with the "red danger", a state of siege was declared in Berlin on 20 July 1932 and General Rundstedt was vested with all executive power in the city in which, it was claimed, a general strike was liable to break out at any moment. US President Hoover elevated the putting down of popular protest demonstrations by force of arms to the principle of state policy. Back in 1929 the judicial and police machine of the French Third Republic had bombarded the French Communist Party with a whole number of repressive measures, forcing it into a semi-legal status.² In Britain the so-called national government forced through Parliament a series of laws curbing freedom of the press. In Canada Bennett's Conservative government went much further and, in 1931, incarcerated communist leaders and outlawed the Party. One of the first decrees of the bourgeois republic that replaced the monarchy in Spain in 1931 was to adopt a number of anti-democratic laws, including one restricting trade union freedom and the right to strike.³

The rapidly-changing circumstances, the unheard-of worsening of the need and poverty of the oppressed classes and the onslaught of capital on hard-won civil rights and liberties provoked both a stubborn popular resistance and a politicisation of demands and slogans advanced by the masses. The economic and political struggle of working people against the incursions of capital during the 1929-1933 world economic crisis stirred up the labour movement in all countries of the bourgeois world. It was a difficult period of shedding well-embedded illusions and prejudices, a time of gathering strength on the platform of class struggle, of testing the capabilities of parties and unions, of checking up new ways and means of fighting, ideological programmes and slogans. It provided a great deal from the standpoint of gaining experience.

The traditional economic crisis leading to the depreciation of basic capital had created a foundation for its renovation and a fresh cyclical upswing of production. During the 1930s this mechanism of automatic exit for the capitalist economy from crisis broke down. The financial and industrial circles of capitalist countries and bourgeois politicians began to veer more and more towards ideas of stepping up bourgeois state intervention in the economy, macroeconomic regulation, and "social responsibility" of government for the destiny

¹ See D. S. Davidovich, *Ernst Thälmann. Pages of Life and Struggle*, Moscow, 1971; L. I. Ginsberg, *The Shadow of the Fascist Swastika. How Hitler Came to Power*, Moscow, 1967 (both in Russian).

² See Y. I. Rubinsky, *France's Uneasy Years*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 157, 158 (in Russian).

³ See *Problems of Spanish History*, Moscow, 1971, p. 43 (in Russian).

of its citizens, prescribed by bourgeois ideologists as a means of rescuing the system from complete catastrophe.

As Lenin once pointed out, the state has always had an effect on economic processes and has never stood by passively in protecting ruling class interests.¹ The years of the Great Depression marked the commencement of a qualitatively new stage in the development of state-monopoly tendencies within capitalist states. In different countries they were manifest in various forms and with varying force. But the essence was the same everywhere: a drive to give capitalism back its lost stability, to prolong its existence through adapting to new realities in concert with "social appeasement" measures. In that respect the variety of methods and ploys used was extremely wide—from liberal reformism to fascist dictatorship. In many countries the ruling classes opted for intermediate forms.

The crisis at the top was becoming increasingly acute; the bourgeoisie was becoming more and more frantic, as it lost its footing and had its trust shaken in the state institutions, parties, theories, standards of law and morality that it had established itself. The monopoly bourgeoisie saw a way out of the crisis in resolving all the major contradictions both at home and abroad by violent means—i.e., by means of war and fascism.²

The strongest crisis in bourgeois democracy and the reactionary transformation of all its political institutions had been a long time in the making. The worsening of imperialism's domestic and foreign contradictions following World War I and the splitting of the world into two systems made the bourgeoisie particularly prone to adopt authoritarian methods of preserving its domination. Previous, traditional forms of running society now seemed ineffective, even pernicious. As the Italian communist leader Palmiro Togliatti said in his lectures on fascism read in Moscow in August 1935, "The bourgeoisie must turn against what it itself created, because what once was a factor of its development today has become an obstacle to the preservation of capitalist society."³

On the whole, the development of *fascism in Western Europe* was an undulating process, with alternate periods of rise and fall. The first upsurge came between 1919 and 1923. During the relative stabilisation of capitalism, the uninterrupted growth of fascist tendencies certainly occurred in most countries but in less overt form.

¹ See V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, p. 355.

² See *Thesis and Resolutions of the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, pp. 7-8.

³ Palmiro Togliatti, *Lectures on Fascism*, New York, 1976, p. 4; see also, N. P. Komolova, G. S. Filatov, "Palmiro Togliatti—Outstanding Figure in the Italian and International Communist Movement", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 4, 1980, pp. 89, 90.

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The second wave of fascism came during the 1929-1933 world economic crisis; moreover, the strongest catalyst in the fascist process in Europe was the fascist take-over in Germany in January 1933.¹

In one form or another, on various scales the fascist movement encompassed the entire capitalist world. At a time of increasing instability of the capitalist system bourgeois reaction staked on fascism to halt the mounting forces of socialist revolution. Given the whole specifics of fascism in individual countries and regions, given the dissimilarity of paths of development and methods of gaining power, fascism everywhere had essentially a common class basis. In the early stages fascism popularised itself as a movement from below and even as an anti-capitalist movement, using strident promises, theatrical effects and chauvinistic propaganda to win over extensive petty-bourgeois sections of the population, *déclassé* elements, and young people, garbing itself in the toga of a warrior fighting for the interests of the "insulted and humiliated", demagogically linking the notion of nation with that of class.² Once it achieved its end, fascism straight-away revealed its class nature as the power of the most reactionary-minded large-scale monopoly bourgeoisie and those grouped around them.

The Comintern, in contradistinction to social democratic theorists and Trotskyists who saw in fascism a mutiny by enraged small-holders against rising economic troubles,³ something episodic and swiftly transitory, had long before Hitler came to power exposed and spelled out the class nature of the phenomenon, seeing it primarily as an offspring of imperialist reaction and an instrument of monopoly capital.

The Comintern Programme adopted by the Sixth Congress stated: "The combination of social demagogy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics, are the characteristic features of Fascism. In periods of acute crisis for the bourgeoisie, Fascism resorts to anti-capitalist phraseology, but, after it has established itself at the helm of State, it casts aside its anti-capitalist rattle and discloses itself as a terrorist dictatorship of big capital."⁴

The very fact that the working class and its political and economic organisations became the main objects of fascist terror showed from what class source the latter-day Cavaignacs came, those who had no

¹ See *History of Fascism in Western Europe*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 8, 9 (in Russian).

² See *The Working Class and the Contemporary World*, No. 4, 1973, p. 146 (in Russian).

³ See L. B. Moskvina, *The Working Class and Its Allies*, Moscow, 1977, p. 94 (in Russian).

⁴ *Programme of the Communist International*, op. cit., p. 23.

equal in history in cruelty and cunning. It was not hard to see international imperialism's aspiration to stifle revolutionary forces, depriving them of their principal support, behind the hatred that the fascist leaders had always harboured for the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, behind their plans to destroy the first socialist power in the world.

The benevolence shown by the big bourgeoisie to the fascist movement was apparent early on and in varying fashion—from expressions of political sympathy to open support (material and political). Documentary evidence and innumerable facts demonstrate that most of the funds at the disposal of fascist organisations in Italy in 1922 came from voluntary donations by industrialists and landowners.¹ Subsequently the links between the fascist state and Italian monopoly capital became strong and durable.² In Germany the fascist movement received mounting support from the mid-1920s from industrial magnates and big financiers.³ Thanks to the efforts primarily of Thyssen, Flick, Schröder, Schacht and others the fascists were able from the early 1930s to count on the backing of owners of Rhine-Westphalian heavy industry. Vast sums flowed into the accounts of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) for its election campaign and storm trooper arming. In the autumn of 1932 the demand for the Hitlerites to take a leading part in government became common for most leading groups of German heavy industry.⁴

In the eyes of the big bourgeoisie fascism had acquired particular value in the years of the world economic crisis for two reasons.

First, in the fascist parties it had obtained an instrument for repressing the labour and revolutionary movement. Second, those parties enabled it with some success to pursue a policy of ideological deceit and of damping down left radical sentiments among wide sections of the public. The big bourgeoisie, panic-stricken at the thought of losing control of the masses through the crisis in the old parliamentary system, perceived in fascism a means of preserving and extending the social base of its rule.

Hitler's coming to power was the signal for a wide-ranging assault by fascism in many capitalist countries. Events showed that in the course of that onslaught fascism tried to annihilate not simply the labour movement and its political organisations, but also democratic institutions generally, including parliament and suffrage. The fatal danger hanging over the labour movement in capitalist states could not be compared to the already-known outbursts of reaction on the part of the ruling class. It had a total character that threat-

¹ See *History of Fascism in Western Europe*, pp. 60, 62.

² See *Ibid.*, pp. 87-98, 98-107.

³ See *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 209.

ened all spiritual and cultural values accumulated by humanity over many centuries and comprising its great accomplishment. It became a question of the survival of whole peoples and states, inasmuch as the fascist programme was based on a misanthropic theory of racism and territorial conquest. Using fascism as a shock force, international imperialist reaction was striving to implement its long-held plan for destroying the first socialist state in the world.¹

The threat gained momentum. At the same time, however, it served to stimulate the working class to close ranks and all anti-fascist and democratic forces to combine their efforts. The fascist dictatorship in Italy, the Tsankov coup in Bulgaria, the downfall of the Weimar Republic in Germany all indicated first and foremost how dreadfully split the working class was, how weak were its links with the peasantry and the urban middle strata. It had to pay a high price for the dissipation of democratic forces, for underestimating the relationship between fighting for democracy and fighting for socialism. The very development of events taught a severe lesson to the international labour movement and all peace-loving forces.

Changes in the political situation were also bound up, of course, not merely with the mounting menace of fascism. While maintaining the major trend in the policy of state-monopoly capital that spelled reaction all along the line,² it altered its form in various capitalist countries depending on the balance of class forces, the peculiarities of the domestic and foreign situation, and political traditions. In several countries where the bourgeoisie felt it was particularly secure, it found it more advantageous (while by no means rejecting as a matter of principle the method of terror and coercion) to resort to social manoeuvring in its contention with the mounting wave of popular protest.

A classical example of such social manoeuvring was the New Deal adopted by the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt who came to power in 1933. Roosevelt declared his mission to be to save capitalism from the threat of utter collapse by "renovating" the whole economic structure of society, modernising labour legislation and organising wide-ranging assistance to the mass of working people. In the United States of America bourgeois liberalism had dressed itself up as a truly "popular" political movement; elsewhere the ruling class either had let in "worker" governments headed by right-wing reformist social democratic leaders (like Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour government of 1929-31 in Britain; Thorvald Stauning's government in Denmark between 1932 and 1940; the social

¹ See N. I. Lebedev, *The Great October Revolution and Reconstruction of International Relations*, Moscow, 1978, p. 102 (in Russian).

² See V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1977, p. 287.

democratic cabinets in Sweden, etc.) or had generously invited members of social reformist parties to take part in so-called national unity governments or coalition cabinets (Belgium and Holland) headed by bourgeois leaders. Indicative of this were the events in Spain where, in January 1930, right-wing groups resorted to excommunicating the dictator Primo de Rivera, then demolishing the monarchy so as to avert a popular revolution by replacing the incumbent regime; the proximity of such a revolution was evident from mounting social discontent and signs of a fresh upsurge in the labour movement.

Bourgeois reformism took on new features in the extremely tense atmosphere of the 1930s, under circumstances of increasing attraction of socialist ideals. The sphere of social activity of the bourgeois state was widening and its functions becoming more complex. Right-wing socialist theories of social partnership were being recognised by the propertied class. The liberal bourgeoisie had begun freely to borrow from social reformists the slogan of campaigning for popular government, full employment, redistribution of wealth and access to ownership. The New Deal reforms in the USA were taken up everywhere as the prototype of peaceful revolution, allegedly levelling out all social strata of the population and making accessible to all the blessings of a highly-developed capitalist economy. That bourgeois social strategy was intended to mask the real nature of power, the undivided political sway of the monopolies and the financial oligarchy, to make the labour movement obedient and tame.

In exposing the reasoning that lay behind such bourgeois mimicry, Lenin back in 1905 had perceptively written: "At the root of all this gigantic bourgeois subterfuge (gigantic in the extent of its influence on the masses) lies an urge to reduce the working-class movement mainly to a trade union movement, to keep it as far away as possible from an independent policy (i.e., one that is revolutionary and directed towards a democratic dictatorship)..."¹ Never before the 1930s, however, had the bourgeois urge to defuse the labour movement by imposing on it the class collaboration notion manifested itself on such a gigantic scale.

All of this put particular demands on the battle readiness of the working class, on its revolutionary consciousness and ideological tempering. Organisations of the proletariat, its parties and trade unions were put to the test to show the durability of class positions and theoretical maturity. The task of the labour movement's revolutionary vanguard in mastering all forms of resistance to capital's ideological and political onslaught was now extremely urgent. What was sufficient and valid yesterday was now either inadequate or im-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1977, p. 120.

possible in the new circumstances. In other words, real life and the changed situation were forcing the labour movement to reformulate the specific tasks of assembling the political forces of socialist revolution.

The international situation also posed particular problems in regard to the role and tactics of the labour movement *in combating imperialism and its policy of launching a new world war*, of forcibly redividing the world, primarily through military attack against the USSR and destroying the first socialist state in the world. What is more, the 1929-33 world economic crisis precipitated such far-reaching consequences and changes in international relations that the issues of war and peace now acquired key significance. Among those changes were the demise of the Versailles-Washington system of postwar arrangement of the world, a worsening of inter-imperialist contradictions, exacerbation of the struggle between the two systems, growth of militarism and the war danger as a result of the heightened expansionism of the ruling oligarchies in capitalist states and the formation of a bloc of aggressive powers—Germany, Italy and Japan. Although the aggressive aspirations of the Axis powers affected the interests of other Western countries, particularly Britain, France and the USA, the latter did not take effective measures to stave off aggression. Furthermore, advocates of collusion with the aggressors on an anti-Soviet platform began to carry more and more weight among the ruling circles of those nations.

Because of counteraction by Western powers, the protracted Soviet campaign to bridle the aggressors had not led to any effective system of collective security.¹ Yet it is quite apparent that owing largely to the existence of the Soviet Union, the growth in its economic and military power and the success of its foreign policy, the opportunities for imperialism to implement its reactionary plans had narrowed.

The ability of the international proletariat to withstand the threat of humanity's enslavement by imperialism's aggressive forces had increased. The growing organisation and political awareness of the working class wrecked the plans of proponents of extreme right-wing capitalist groups and ruling oligarchies to put together a united anti-Soviet front and to bring down the stronghold of peace and socialism. As a result, events did not go the way the appeasers wished—isolating the USSR and waging war by all imperialist states against the socialist state. In the mounting unity of action between existing socialism and all anti-fascist, anti-imperialist forces headed

¹ See *History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1975*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1980, pp. 322, 327, 330-31 (in Russian).

by the international working class the historical inevitability of defeating imperialism's shock force, fascism, found its most palpable expression.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF FIGHTING FASCISM AND THE THREAT OF WAR

In circumstances of worsening social and economic conditions and crisis in bourgeois democracy, the communist movement was the only organised political force conducting a decisive and resolute struggle against imperialist reaction and fascism. The Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee (March-April 1931) noted the growing confrontation between the two systems—onward-marching socialism and crisis-ridden capitalism—and pointed out that the bourgeoisie was stepping up its offensive not only “against the working class, but also against other broad strata of toilers in town and country”; it was “organising terrorist Fascist groups” and attacking worker and all other revolutionary organisations.¹

In drawing up an anti-fascist policy, the Plenum opposed views that fascism was only the sign of capitalist decay, while fascist dictatorship was an inevitable historical stage that would speed up the demise of the capitalist system. Fascism, said D. Manuilsky, Soviet representative on the Executive Committee, is not merely a sign of capitalism's decay and crisis, it “is one of the forms of the attack of capitalism containing elements for the overcoming of the crisis... Fascism is both an attack and a defence on the part of capitalism.”² Fascist dictatorship would signify a temporary setback for the proletariat. Communist parties were faced with the task of uniting all efforts to fight against both the prevailing fascist dictatorships and any onslaught by fascism, against growing fascist trends, against all measures taken by reactionary governments to strengthen fascism's positions.

In the situation then prevailing, not all processes associated with the regrouping of class forces and the urgent promotion of anti-fascist-democratic tasks to the forefront had crystallised with sufficient clarity.

The Eleventh ECCI Plenum inscribed in its decisions that “The development of the class struggle amidst the further development of the world economic crisis confronts the broad masses of the toilers with the *decisive* alternatives: either dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—or the dictatorship of the proletariat; either economic and political

¹ *Eleventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Theses, Resolutions and Decisions*, London, pp. 4, 5.

² *The Communist International*, Nos. 11-12, 15 June 1931, Vol. 8, p. 342.

slavery or—to put an end to capitalist exploitation and oppression.”¹

In the early 1930s communist strategy in the major capitalist countries was as follows: the aim of that stage of struggle was socialist revolution; the main class enemy was the bourgeoisie; an alliance of social forces dealing with the paramount task was to consist of the working class, the rural proletariat and the semi-proletarian groups of town and country. The decisions of the Eleventh Plenum spoke of the maturing of a second round of revolution and war and of this round “being bound to shake the world much more profoundly and extensively than the 1918-1919 upsurge.”² An analogy was made between the prevailing situation and conditions of 1918-1919. There is no doubt that they had grossly overestimated the degree and rate of maturation of the revolutionary crisis, they had insufficiently taken into consideration the fact that the balance of forces consequent upon the fascist offensive had altered and become more complicated and contradictory.

The conclusions drawn by the Comintern and communist parties rested on certain trends in the social struggle. Communists saw a polarisation of class forces taking place and the bourgeoisie moving more and more towards fascist patterns, while the parties aspiring to play the role of defenders of bourgeois-democratic liberties were incapable of putting up any resistance to advancing reaction and fascism. Workers were becoming more embittered against reactionary bourgeois regimes that were reducing working people to poverty and depriving them of their rights. The slogan of bringing down capitalism and establishing proletarian power increasingly appealed to the advanced sector of the working class. Yet all those trends were viewed by Communists as absolutely prevailing in the social struggle, which did not correspond to reality at all. Communist parties felt that crisis and fascist patterns in capitalist states, on the one hand, and the success of Soviet socialism, on the other, were pushing the working class towards a decisive struggle against all forms of capitalist dictatorship, including bourgeois democracy.³ That is why they propagated the most radical way out of the crisis—socialist revolution. They saw the fight of revolutionary workers for their economic demands and rights, against the onslaught of reaction and fascism, as direct preparation for socialist revolution.

It was in that spirit that the Eleventh ECCI Plenum defined the attitude of Communists to the bourgeois camp. Having indicated certain tactical disagreements amongst the bourgeoisie, the Ple-

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 22, 27 April 1931, Vol. 11, p. 411.

² *Communist Parties and Capitalist Crisis. Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee*, Issue I, pp. 42-43 (in Russian).

³ See *The Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, pp. 326-27.

num underestimated contradictions between bourgeois democracy and fascism. In its resolutions it said that Communists should decisively put an end to liberal counterposing of "fascism of bourgeois democracy and parliamentary forms of bourgeois dictatorship to its blatantly fascist forms."¹

Owing to right-wing social democratic opposition to the revolutionary proletarian movement and inaction in the face of fascism's drive for power, the Comintern and communist parties gave an even more negative assessment of the role of social democracy than hitherto. They felt it was even more justified than before, given the new situation, to regard social democracy as the main social prop of the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, they formulated certain specific tactical resolutions that attacked social democracy even more vigorously.

The assessment of social democracy as social fascism became widespread in the communist movement. That was not only the result of a schematic, sectarian approach by Communists towards social democracy, it was also the reaction by revolutionary workers to the policy being pursued by right-wing leaders of social democracy. The policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie that these leaders were pursuing frequently took such forms when the social democratic hierarchy took part in terrorist reprisals against revolutionary workers, in just the same way as fascists were doing. Just as patently obvious was the tendency on the part of some right-wing Social Democrats in the early 1930s to put forward manifestos close to fascist corporative plans. A number of social democratic parties were spawning political groups defending plans to establish "authoritarian power". Many rightist leaders among the Social Democrats were striving to accommodate themselves to the fascist regime and, in some periods like, for instance, in Bulgaria, to join the fascists in government.²

In mentioning the attitude of Communists to social democracy at the time, the late Mikhail Suslov, the CPSU CC Political Bureau member, emphasised that "The thesis that Social-Democracy represented the greatest danger was unjustified and the fact that the main brunt of the attack was directed towards it for a certain period was essentially an expression of sectarian tendencies."³ It was wrong to

¹ *The Communist International in Documents, 1919-1932*, Moscow, 1933, p. 957 (in Russian).

² Joseph Schleifstein, *Die "Sozialfaschismus"—These. Zu ihrem geschichtlichen Hintergrund*, Frankfurt/Main, 1980, pp. 39-89; Horst Schumacher, *Die Kommunistische Internationale (1919-1943). Grundzüge ihres Kampfes für Frieden, Demokratie, nationale Befreiung und Sozialismus*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 100-103.

³ M. A. Suslov, *Marxism-Leninism—The International Teaching of the Working Class*, Moscow, 1975, p. 133.

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define it as social fascism despite the fact that some social democratic leaders merited that description by their behaviour. It hampered the movement from making a timely observation that anti-fascist sentiments were growing among Social Democrats and that as fascism advanced Social Democrats, apart from their right-wing leaders, could join the anti-fascist struggle.

The Plenum also supported the resolutions of the Fifth Profintern (Red International of Trade Unions) Congress of August 1930 on the need to turn revolutionary trade union opposition in some capitalist countries into independent revolutionary unions that ought to head the proletariat's economic battles. That recommendation also narrowed the chances of Communists working among the people, it separated the revolutionary minority from the main trade union body.

The united workers' front tactics in those years were seen largely as those of exposure aimed both at the right-wing leaders and at the lower officials of social democratic organisations. There was an underestimation of the opportunity for having an alliance with the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie. As the fascist influence on the petty bourgeoisie of town and country grew, they often began to be seen even as potential fascist recruits. The notion of "agrarian fascism" appeared.

All those ideas hampered the communist movement in utilising opportunities to the optimum, opportunities that were opening up during the world economic crisis for drawing the widest number of people into the fight against reaction and fascism. Nonetheless, those were errors and shortcomings of a fighting party that was not begrudging any effort to repulse the class foe and was not afraid of sacrifices. Communists were the most consistent opponents of fascism and playing a vanguard role in the mass struggle against capital and reaction. Communists were in the front line wherever workers, the unemployed, salaried workers, rural labourers and farmers, and intellectuals were starting to fight even for minimum demands, wherever acute class clashes flared up, wherever real battles were taking place against the incursions of capital.

The Comintern and communist parties endeavoured to use international solidarity as a shield to withstand the attack of capital and fascism. International days of struggle against unemployment were held on 6 March 1930 and 25 February 1931. Issues of coordinating anti-fascist action were frequently discussed. On Comintern initiative an International Day of Action against Imperialist War was inaugurated from 1 August 1929.

Communists were gaining experience in the mass struggle and specific political actions, and this had great importance in seeking ways of mobilising people against reaction and fascism. These

searches were above all manifest in attempts to broaden the united workers' front tactics and in criticism of sectarian mistakes that had hampered consolidation of anti-fascist-minded workers.

In 1931 and 1932 leftist sectarian groups that had prevented a mass anti-fascist policy were defeated ideologically and organisationally. They included the Bullejos-Trilla group in Spain, the Barbé-Célor group in France and the Neumann-Remmele group in Germany.

Steps were taken at the Twelfth ECCI Plenum in August and September 1932 to remove certain obstacles in the way of a united front policy. It was stressed that communist parties had to develop and extend contacts with the mass of non-party, social democratic and syndicalist workers, and to win their trust. The Plenum condemned as incorrect that a fascistisation was taking place among even grass-roots social democratic organisations and that it was therefore impossible to have a united front with them. Otto Kuusinen said at the plenary meeting that proposals had to be put for concerted action to grass-roots reformist trade union organisations and even to local social democratic organisations; it would therefore be wrong to demand that members of those organisations break with their leaders.¹ Klement Gottwald pointed out that in fighting for a united front one should not make a precondition that communist parties had to lead the movement. A party could only attain that leadership through a protracted selfless battle in defence of workers' interests.² Ernst Thälmann emphasised the need to fight for particular demands and condemned the slogan of "defeating reformist trade unions" and the view of those unions as some form of "school of capitalism."³

So the Plenum reviewed several former sectarian notions and oriented communist parties to mobilising people against fascism, reaction and war. At the same time, however, it repeated certain conclusions that had given grounds for exaggerated assessments of the rate of maturation of revolutionary upsurge and for directing the main attack against social democracy.

The events in Germany, Hitler's coming to power in January 1933, the mob violence of fascist bands and bloody reprisals against proletarian revolutionaries and democrats, the stepped-up attack of fascists in other countries, the defeat of the "lesser evil" social democratic policy all shook the international labour movement deeply.

On 13 February 1933 the communist parties of France, Germany

¹ *Twelfth Plenum of the ECCI. Report of O. W. Kuusinen "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Sections of the Comintern"*, London, (n.d.), p. 85.

² See K. Gottwald, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, pp. 302-303 (in Russian).

³ See *Twelfth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee, Verbatim Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 56-57 (in Russian).

and Poland jointly appealed to social democratic workers to "forge an invincible united front of proletarian struggle".¹

Confronted by the tragedy afflicting Germany, the communist proposals for united action against fascism began to find an increasingly ready accord among social democratic workers. The Labour and Socialist International (LSI), being no longer able to ignore the workers' mood, appealed to the workers of all countries on 19 February 1933, stating its agreement to hold talks with the Comintern for the purpose of concerted anti-fascist action. But the call contained no concrete programme, confining itself merely to stopping "mutual recriminations" by Communists and Social Democrats—i.e., a proposal to conclude something like a "non-aggression pact".

In an appeal to workers of the world on 5 March 1933, the Comintern set out a specific militant programme for anti-fascist struggle by workers' parties as a platform of united action. The ECCI called upon "all Communist Parties to make yet another attempt to set up the united front of struggle with the social democratic workers through the medium of the social democratic parties",² so as to put a stop to the advance of capital and fascism. The Comintern, therefore, was proposing for the first time in years an agreement between communist and social democratic parties at summit level. That was a serious step towards a policy of wide-ranging concerted action by the working class. Initially, however, the Secretariat and then the LSI Executive Committee turned the offer down.³ The socialist parties to which the Communists had proposed a united anti-fascist front were rejecting it under various pretexts.

Despite the rebuff, Communists continued to seek ways of consolidating anti-fascist-minded workers. The European Anti-Fascist Workers Congress that met in the Pleyel Hall in Paris in June 1933 was an important step towards bringing communist and social democratic workers together. Convened on communist initiative, the Congress also attracted some social democratic workers and progressive anti-fascist intellectuals. And the international campaign in defence of Georgi Dimitrov, falsely accused of complicity in setting the Reichstag on fire, provided a fresh impulse to unity.⁴

In late 1933 the Thirteenth ECCI Plenum called for the united workers' front campaign against fascism to be stepped up, taking account of the shifts taking place in the labour movement. It set

¹ *L'Humanité*, 13 February 1933.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 11, 9 March 1933, Vol. 13, p. 261.

³ *Internationale Information*, herausgegeben vom Sekretariat der Sozialistischen Arbeiterinternationale, Zurich, No. 17, 31 March 1933.

⁴ For more detail see M. Semkov, P. Radenkova, "Victor in the Duel with Fascism at the Leipzig Tribunal", *Georgi Dimitrov—Outstanding Figure in the Communist Movement*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 132-78 (in Russian).

communist parties the task of mobilising the widest possible mass of working people against war. One of the major conclusions was that the proletariat could through its struggle "hinder and put off ... the war". Communist parties were to combat the fatalistic view that nothing could stop the onrush of imperialist war and that real revolution would begin only as a result of a new imperialist war.

The Plenum defined the class character of fascism as naked terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie and pointed out that fascism was the enemy both of revolutionary workers and of the broad mass of working people and democrats. From that idea Communists swiftly came to appreciate that the fight against fascism would be a general democratic struggle by wide sections of the populace.

Another important conclusion was that the fascist government in Germany was the main instigator of war in Europe.

All the same, many points of the Plenum resolutions proceeded from old premises. As before the Plenum overestimated the extent of maturation of revolutionary crisis. It was said in particular that "In Germany ... a new revolutionary upsurge is already beginning" because of the fascists taking power.¹ Although the advance of fascism had changed the situation, the Plenum continued to brand social democracy as the major social support of the bourgeoisie (even in fascist countries).

Thus, despite events providing much fresh experience and communist parties making a number of correct steps corresponding to the new circumstances, the communist movement was late in providing a new strategy.

The Comintern and communist parties in most capitalist countries pursued a strategy of socialist revolution. Although valid as the movement's ultimate goal, the policy was nonetheless at variance with the obtaining situation and far from winning support from most of the working class and other working people.² The movement had to find new slogans that would unite all anti-fascists.

Eminent members of the communist movement got down to discussing the new issues. Georgi Dimitrov, hero of the Leipzig Trial who was snatched from the grasp of the Nazi gaolers, actually headed the Comintern's collective work on fresh political resolutions. The work was done in close contact with the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks).

They devoted their main efforts to finding ways of resolving the vital practical task of tearing down the wall dividing communist and

¹ *Thirteenth Plenum of the ECCI. Theses and Decisions*, London, p. 43.

² See *The Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, p. 327.

social democratic workers, the wall that was preventing them from uniting in the fight against fascism and reaction.

Preparatory committees launched work to get ready for the Seventh Comintern Congress; the committees involved many outstanding figures in the international communist movement and the CPSU(B), like Georgi Dimitrov, Wilhelm Pieck, Palmiro Togliatti, D.Z. Manuilsky, Otto Kuusinen, Wang Ming, Fritz Heckert, Bohumir Šmeral and Béla Kun.

At the first session of the preparatory committee on 14 June 1934 Kuusinen and Manuilsky raised a question on the first item on the agenda, voicing the need for radical changes in tactics of communist parties and the international revolutionary labour movement. Manuilsky noted that the slogan of direct struggle for proletarian power was out of step with the situation prevailing in many capitalist countries. In declaring socialism to be the ultimate aim of the movement, he said, "we must possess a more concrete battle programme: not proletarian dictatorship, not socialism but a programme that will lead people to the fight for proletarian dictatorship and socialism."¹

In a letter of 1 July 1934 to the Comintern Executive Committee and the CPSU(B) Central Committee, addressed to Joseph Stalin, Dimitrov set a whole range of questions to be debated. He suggested reviewing former assessments of social democracy, especially the notion of social fascism, and advocated uniting revolutionary and reformist trade unions, turning the united front tactics into an effective means of launching a mass struggle against fascism.

The proposing and adopting of new ideas were bound up with a review of and break with already well-entrenched and apparently correct erstwhile ideas. Two streams now came together in drawing up new guidelines: one from below, from communist parties themselves, the other from above, from the Comintern leadership. The CPSU(B) representatives had a big hand in posing fresh questions within the Comintern and in the discussions underway within the Comintern Executive Committee. The problems of evaluating the situation, of labour movement tasks in fighting fascism and of preparing for the Congress were all subjects of constant discussion among the CPSU(B) leadership; the results of these debates then found reflection in the work of the preparatory committees, in the draft reports and decisions.²

In the summer and autumn of 1934, the Comintern and communist

¹ See *The Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, p. 377.

² For further details on the CPSU(B) role in preparations for the Seventh Congress, see K. K. Shirinya, "From the History of Preparing for the Seventh Congress of the Communist International", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 8, 1975, pp. 49-61.

parties had already drawn important conclusions on the need to focus the main labour movement effort on thwarting the fascist offensive, extending the united workers' front policy, achieving concerted action with social democratic parties in the fight against fascism, merging revolutionary and reformist unions in some countries, and involving the peasants and urban middle strata in vigorous anti-fascist action. Agreement between the French Communist Party and the French Socialist Party on a united front, proclaiming the obligation to use joint effective methods of class struggle against fascism and reaction, was a crucial turning point of primary international significance.

The next step was to work out a Popular Front policy. The idea of extending the united workers' front to an alliance uniting the peasants and middle urban strata as well had been voiced by many figures in the communist movement. Maurice Thorez, for example, had formulated a proposal to form an anti-fascist Popular Front, uniting petty-bourgeois strata as well, at a meeting in Paris on 9 October 1934; he had thereby indicated a political formula expressing that idea. The documents adopted on 15 October by the Political Committee of the ECCI Political Secretariat mentioned that communist parties should extend the united workers' front policy and work to establish "the widest possible anti-fascist front of working people". The proposal was made for France to set up a worker-farmer alliance, or a labour alliance.¹ A specific programme of demands was formulated, intended to consolidate all the working people in the country, even including the petty bourgeoisie.

The French Communist Party's experience of fighting to create an anti-fascist front became the subject, in December 1934, of an all-embracing discussion within the Comintern Executive Committee and was heartily supported by the majority of its members.

The idea that communist parties should advance to the forefront in the fight against fascism, imperialist reaction and the forces of war, a broad platform of general democratic and immediate economic demands—i.e., a Popular Front platform, received virtually unanimous support within the Comintern and communist party leadership in late 1934-early 1935. A key issue now began to be debated: would this general democratic and anti-fascist struggle be merely a tactical ploy or would it comprise an integral transitional strategic phase in development towards a socialist revolution?

The Comintern Executive Committee concluded that anti-fascist, general democratic tasks were being advanced to the forefront and that what was necessary was a phase of general democratic struggle in several countries, a struggle that would permit to join efforts to

¹ See *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 8, 1975, pp. 57-58.

bring down fascism, which would open the way to the following stage—socialist revolution. That maxim was the cornerstone of the new strategic orientation of the communist movement in capitalist countries. It was given all-round backing by the *Seventh Comintern Congress* (25 July to 21 August 1935) in whose work 513 delegates representing 76 communist parties and several international organisations took part. By the time the Congress opened there were as many as 3,140,000 Communists in the world, including 785,000 in capitalist states. Of all communist parties in capitalist countries only 22 (11 in Europe) were operating legally or semi-legally, the remainder being in the underground.

In describing the balance of forces in the worldwide class struggle, the Congress indicated the decisive importance of the victory of socialism in the USSR for world development. It laid particular stress on Soviet influence on international relations and the struggle of the working class and all working people for peace and against the fascist instigators of war.¹

The Congress reaffirmed the conclusion drawn by the Thirteenth Comintern Executive Committee Plenum that fascism in power was naked terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialist elements of finance capital; it pointed out that this formula expressed the class essence of fascism and revealed whose particular instrument it was.² At the same time, the Congress pointed to contradictions between fascism and bourgeois democracy. As Georgi Dimitrov said in his report to the Congress, the coming of fascism to power was not the usual replacement of one bourgeois government by another, but the replacement of one state form of bourgeois class rule—bourgeois democracy—by another form—overt terrorist dictatorship. The Congress “put its full force against ignoring the qualitative difference between fascism and bourgeois democracy”.³

The Comintern returned to Leninist tenets on two methods of bourgeois rule and turned its back on those simplistic assessments that the whole of the bourgeoisie had become fascist-minded, while bourgeois-democratic regimes were simply the consolidation of fascism with its moderate social democratic wing advancing to the forefront.

¹ *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, pp. 51-54.

² Discussions within the preparatory committees, the articles by R. Palme Dutt and A. de Leeuw in the communist press, as well as P. Togliatti's lectures on fascism read in the Lenin School (see Palmiro Togliatti, *Lectures on Fascism*, New York, 1976), had huge importance for an all-round assessment of fascism.

³ B. N. Ponomarev, “To the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Formation of the Communist International”, *Revolutionary Heritage of the Communist International. Scientific Conference Dedicated to Sixty Years since the Foundation of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1980, p. 8 (in Russian).

The Congress saw fascism as a form of the political superstructure of monopoly capital, associated with the period of extreme worsening of class contradictions and initial instability of bourgeois regimes. Communists now had a clear understanding of the place of fascism in imperialism's social-economic and political development, and condemned notions of the fatalistic inevitability of fascism.

The Congress ratified the view that petty-bourgeois and déclassé elements forming fascism's mass basis were being used by fascism against their real interests as a shock force against the labour and democratic movement; it characterised the ideology of fascism as one whose kernel comprised warlike bourgeois nationalism, chauvinism and racism; it characterised fascist foreign policy, which proclaimed its aim as enslaving and even wiping out other peoples, a policy that had brought humanity to the brink of a new world war; it outlined the specific traits of fascism as a socio-political phenomenon variously manifested in different countries, possessing differences in social basis and some aspects of ideology, relying in some cases also on reactionary landowning groups and the top brass.¹

The Congress also analysed the causes of fascism's triumph in certain countries, of the growth in the fascist movement, and above all it dealt with the question of why the working class had not been able to organise resistance to fascism in time. Fascism had been able to gain power largely because, as Dimitrov said in his report, "the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social-Democratic leaders, proved to be split, politically and organisationally disarmed, in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the Communist Parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the Social-Democrats, were not strong enough to rouse the masses and to lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism."² The Congress underlined the historical guilt of right-wing social democracy in that most of the working class that had followed social democratic parties were passive at the moment when the fascist mobs were straining for power. Fascism had triumphed because the proletariat had been isolated from its natural allies, while the fascist parties had succeeded in

¹ More recent studies of fascism by Marxist historians confirm the major conclusions of the Seventh Comintern Congress on that issue. See, for example, A. A. Galkin, *German Fascism*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 395-96 (in Russian). For a fuller account of the methods used in analysing fascist dictatorship, see K. K. Schirinya, H. Schumacher, "Der Kampf der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung gegen den Faschismus", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, No. 1, 1975, pp. 3-26; E. Lewerenz, *Die Analyse des Faschismus durch die Kommunistische Internationale. Die Aufdeckung von Wesen und Funktion des Faschismus während der Vorbereitung und Durchführung des VII. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, 1933-1935*, Berlin, 1975.

² Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, Sofia, 1972, p. 16.

using demagogy to turn the heads of considerable numbers of people.

In self-critical vein the Congress declared that a certain amount of guilt lay at the door of communist parties themselves since they had made a number of errors, even though they had also always been consistent fighters against the fascist danger.

While warning "against any underestimation of the fascist danger", the Congress also warned "against the dangerous illusions about an automatic collapse of the fascist dictatorship".¹ It made the point, further, that fascism was striving to establish its dictatorship *before* a decisive popular turn towards socialist revolution.

It described preparations for imperialist war and counter-revolutionary war against the USSR, begun by aggressive forces of world imperialism headed by the fascist states, as a most dangerous trend in the international situation.

The central task of communist parties and the revolutionary labour movement was to create a united workers' and broad popular front against fascism. The Congress defined a united workers' front as the leading force and centre for uniting all anti-fascist elements. "The defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defence of the latter against fascism, must be the starting point and form the main content of the workers' united front in all capitalist countries."² At the same time, Congress resolutions pointed out that where the situation allows, a united front may be used for preparing for a socialist revolution. Thus, while hitherto the unity policy was linked up with the task of winning over the majority of the working class for direct preparations for and implementation of socialist revolution, now it was largely the anti-fascist struggle that had become its essence.

Having stressed that success of the united workers' front depended above all on mutual relations between communist and social democratic parties, the Congress directed Communists to develop a new attitude towards social democracy. While not playing down the fateful consequences of social democratic policy and its historical guilt for the proletariat's defeat in several countries, the Seventh Congress focused attention on the general democratic and anti-fascist potential of social democracy which made its united front with Communists feasible, and facilitated the renovation of social democratic parties in the process of campaigning for a united front, and the overcoming of anti-communist prejudices amongst their members.

The Congress displayed the whole range within which social democratic policy was shifting depending on the particular circumstances: from class collaboration with the bourgeoisie (which was

¹ *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, pp. 14, 15.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

decisive in describing the historical path of social democracy), anti-communism and capitulation to fascism to joint anti-fascist action together with Communists.

In an effort to reach agreement with social democratic parties, the Congress was not proposing unity for attaining proletarian power. It made it clear that unity of action by workers' parties would be for the purpose of opposing fascism and the onslaught of capital and the threat of war, that this did not run counter to the aims of the social democratic parties. Unity would facilitate popular rebuff to the fascist assault, would enhance the political weight of the working class, would have a powerful effect on Catholic, anarchist and unorganised workers, would inspire trust in the power of the working class among the vacillating middle strata, would provide immense support for the movement of downtrodden peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies, and would play a major part in the struggle against the threat of war.¹ Concerted action was proposed for Communists and Social Democrats at all levels: in the factory and city, nationally and between the two Internationals.

In orienting communist parties towards struggle for trade union unity and the establishment of joint unions, the Congress advanced only two conditions: class struggle and inner-union democracy. Communists consented to refrain from setting up party factions within the unions, declaring that they would adhere to the principle of trade unions' organisational autonomy from political parties, though at the same time rejecting union neutrality in relation to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The policy of a united front with the Social Democrats certainly did not reject fighting against the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie or the work for communist enlightenment and mobilisation of the populace. As a Congress resolution said, "Joint action with the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations not only does not preclude, but, on the contrary, *renders still more necessary* the serious and well-founded criticism of reformism, of Social-Democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and the patient exposition of the principles and programme of Communism to the Social-Democratic workers."² The decision reminded delegates that the danger of right-wing mistakes could grow with the unfolding of practical unity of action.

The united front was not confined only to concerted action by communist and social democratic parties. The task was set for involving in it all workers irrespective of their political views and religious convictions, of promoting constant work among the people

¹ Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 27-28.

² *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 21.

who belonged to fascist unions. The Congress recommended communist parties in fascist dictatorships to find a way of working legally and illegally in fascist organisations, of penetrating them so as to set up anti-fascist opposition there.

Communists had foreseen that as the united workers' front policy developed it could lead to a situation where the merging of workers' parties would be on the agenda. The Congress called on communist parties boldly to grasp the initiative in uniting working-class forces in a single revolutionary party. Communists realised that this was a difficult business that would require "stubborn work and struggle and is bound to be a more or less lengthy process".¹ It spelled out the terms that would ensure the Marxist-Leninist nature of combined parties.

The Popular Front policy was given all-round backing in indissoluble association with the united workers' front policy; the former was a policy of establishing a broad inter-class alliance of all forces opposing fascism.

Communists, the Congress said, are safeguarding bourgeois democracy in the fight against fascism, defending primarily those gains that the working people had won in dire struggle over the years.

As Georgi Dimitrov declared, "Now the fascist counter-revolution is attacking bourgeois democracy in an effort to establish the most barbarous regime of exploitation and suppression of the working masses. Now the working masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism."²

In the prevailing situation the anti-fascist and general democratic popular demands were increasingly going beyond the confines of the usual bourgeois-democratic liberties, and were coming close to those of the working class, to socialist objectives.

The Congress viewed the Popular Front from various standpoints: as an alliance of different social forces, as a militant mass movement, as a coalition of socio-political organisations with certain organisational forms and, finally, as a regime of a new anti-fascist power or an offspring of that regime. The anti-fascist Popular Front that united the working class, poor farmers, artisans, urban petty bourgeoisie, employees and intellectuals had nothing in common with former blocs of petty-bourgeois and social democratic parties led by the bourgeoisie, or with the reformist policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie. It was born as a union of a new type in which the working class was playing the main role.

¹ Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Congress decisions emphasised that a Popular Front government arising on the crest of popular struggle against reaction and fascism was bound to differ from the usual left-wing bourgeois governments which mollified capitalist tyranny only slightly. The class nature of a popular front government (or something akin to it) consisted in it expressing and implementing the general democratic interests of the broadest mass of working people, the petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals. The slogan of Popular Front government set out a transitional political goal that was close and understandable to the people, whose attainment would mean the creation of a powerful lever for deep-going general democratic changes that would root out fascism and monopoly reaction in politics and in the economy.

In justifying this slogan, the Seventh Congress was relying on the idea of a "worker-peasant government" which the Comintern had once enunciated with Lenin's participation. As the Congress indicated, depending on the specific correlation of class forces and the maturity and scope of the mass movement, a Popular Front government would play a different role in different countries. In some it would organise a rebuff to fascism and reaction and extend the rights of the working people without initially affecting the basis of the bourgeois regime, and would then go further. In other countries it would play not merely a defensive role, it could even become a government of democratic dictatorship by the working class and peasants. That would be most likely in countries where the anti-fascist struggle was combined with tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. A Popular Front regime, however, could also become transitional government on the way to the stage of struggle for socialism in a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution had occurred some time past.

Communist parties did not see a Popular Front government as obligatory for all capitalist countries on the way to working-class power. The Congress did not exclude the possibility of a direct transition to socialist revolution given the requisite favourable circumstances, although it was thought that most capitalist countries would first have to pass through an anti-fascist, general democratic phase.

The new strategy of the communist movement was not, as Mikhail Suslov underlined, "defensive, dictated only by tasks of rebuffing the fascist onslaught and the threat of war. It was based on the paramount notion that the struggle of the working class and its allies against fascism and imperialist reaction would lead to stronger democratic forces and the establishment of Popular Front regimes or similar anti-fascist democratic regimes which would be an approach and transition to the socialist stage of the struggle. That strategy was a specific development of Lenin's idea of interconnection between the fight for democracy and the fight for socialism, of broad unity be-

tween the working class and other sections of the populace in that fight. It took profound account of the changes underway in the world, the further objective convergence and intertwining of general democratic and socialist tasks."¹ The decisions of the Seventh Congress profoundly exposed that closer union of democracy and socialism. The first anti-fascist phase of revolution, as long as it was consistently implemented, would become the prologue to socialist revolution.²

The notion of an anti-fascist Popular Front as a transitional regime paving the way for socialist transformation was the Comintern's august contribution to furthering Lenin's ideas on ways to socialist revolution. The Congress instructed Communists to give every possible backing to a Popular Front government that would campaign against reaction and fascism. In certain conditions it recognised as sound and desirable that Communists should take part in such a government. At the same time, it stressed that successful struggle by a Popular Front government to implement its programme was feasible only with its firm and constant reliance on the working people's movement.

The Seventh Congress decisions defined a new strategy: the objective of the current stage of the struggle was to defeat fascism and establish anti-fascist democratic regimes; the principal class enemy was the most reactionary groups of monopoly capital; the alliance of social forces opposing the principal foe constituted the working class, the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, intellectuals and all anti-fascist democratic elements. That strategy did not signify putting off the fight for socialist revolution. On the contrary, it was precisely through the general democratic, anti-fascist phase of struggle that the way to socialist revolution was actually possible and most correct in the circumstances.

The Seventh Comintern Congress made an important contribution to promoting the policy of Communists in the colonies and dependencies. In seeing the fight of oppressed peoples as directly linked up with the tasks of other revolutionary forces in the world, it defined the nature and stage of struggle in the oppressed countries as an anti-imperialist and national liberation revolution with an anti-feudal and bourgeois-democratic social content. The slogan of creating a united anti-imperialist front was crucial here. In that connection the Congress specified assessments of the anti-imperialist possibilities of various socio-political forces in the oppressed countries, including the national bourgeoisie. Communist parties received

¹ *The Communist Movement in the Vanguard of the Fight for Peace, National and Social Emancipation. To the Fortieth Anniversary of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 7-8 (in Russian).

² See Y. A. Krasin, *Lenin, Revolution and the Present Day. Lenin's Theory of Socialist Revolution*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 358-59 (in Russian).

a fundamental reply to the question of the political platform of a united anti-imperialist front. All that created a base for ideological and political training of Communists in the oppressed countries for a fresh upsurge in national liberation revolutions.

The Congress attributed particular importance to building an alliance between national liberation revolutions and the international labour movement on firm internationalist foundations, so that the alliance would not be permeated by chauvinism causing cracks and fissures and weakening the united front against imperialism and fascism.

A Congress decision on the anti-war struggle stated that "the central slogan of the Communist Parties must be: struggle for peace".¹

The Congress viewed the anti-war struggle as general democratic, corresponding fully to the class objectives of the revolutionary labour movement. In drawing attention to the need to direct the main attack against German fascism as the major instigator of war, the supreme forum of Communists noted that the acute inter-imperialist contradictions and the increased aggressiveness of fascist states were creating a situation in which cooperation was possible between the USSR and capitalist powers interested at that moment in preserving peace, or even those that were not pursuing immediate aggressive objectives. It justified the need to set up a broad peace front embracing not only the working class, working people and democratic strata, but also those states being menaced by fascist aggression. Communists appealed to all pacifists prepared actually to fight against war to join that front. The Congress showed the possibility of national liberation wars in Europe against the fascist aggressor.

The communist movement opposed the left-wing opportunist underestimation of the fight for peace, the idea that war was a means of clearing the way for revolution. New, more propitious prospects for the anti-war struggle were linked at the same time directly with the mounting power of the USSR, the strengthening of the international labour movement and extension of the general democratic movement for peace.

Considerable shifts were also envisaged in relations between communist parties and the Comintern ruling body. A resolution proposed that the Comintern Executive Committee shift the centre of gravity of its work to drawing up basic political and tactical aims for the communist movement, to proceeding in tackling all questions from concrete circumstances and the distinctive conditions of each country, and avoid as a general rule direct interference in the inner organisational affairs of communist parties. The Executive Commit-

¹ *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 40.

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tee undertook "Systematically to assist in the ... training of cadres ... in the Communist Parties, so that the Parties may be able at sharp turns of events independently and quickly to find, on the basis of the decisions of the Congresses of the Communist International and of the Plenums of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, correct solutions for the political and tactical problems of the Communist movement."¹ This Congress policy—namely that operative political leadership should be completely concentrated directly in the parties themselves, while the Comintern focused attention on drawing up major political and tactical aims for the world labour movement—corresponded to the new, higher level of communist party development. Meanwhile, the Congress underlined that the greater independence of parties required their mastery of all international experience and a constant fight against the danger of national isolation.

That policy met the urgent task of making communist parties more active, enhancing their role and responsibility in the fight against fascism and war; it also envisaged an improvement in their political and tactical skill.

The Congress demonstrated the unity of the international communist movement, its close cohesion on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and its profound ability to provide well-founded answers to the questions raised by social development. "On the main, determining issues it was a *Leninist congress*, a congress returning to Lenin's ideas (of course, with account for the new circumstances), to the conclusions that had been forgotten or set aside throughout the preceding period as a result of the activity of right-wing or "left-wing" elements within the communist movement."²

At the crucial historical moment the communist movement had worked out correct strategy and tactics, ideologically and politically arming the working class and all working people for the struggle under new circumstances.

The new strategy, creatively applied in the specific circumstances of each country, enabled Communists straightaway to occupy more active positions in society. The new communist policy became a powerful instrument for promoting the struggle of the working class and other democratic strata. Although it did not succeed in making any marked breach in the wall of fascist dictatorship in Germany and Italy, the anti-fascist popular actions in Spain, France, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere began rapidly to grow strong.

The Popular Front policy enabled Communists to make consider-

¹ *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 7.

² V. V. Zagladin, "Changes in the World and the Communist Movement", *The Working Class and the Contemporary World*, No. 5, 1975, p. 3 (in Russian).

able progress in using election tactics. The communist parties of several countries concluded alliances on a general democratic and anti-fascist platform with socialist, petty-bourgeois and anti-fascist bourgeois parties. Those pacts were particularly effective in France (1936), Spain (1936) and Chile (1938). In countries where it did not succeed, communist parties proposed interim agreements with Socialists and, in several instances, they called on their supporters to vote for Socialists so as to prevent a victory by reactionary parties.

The Comintern Executive Committee rendered constant assistance to communist parties in consistently and creatively carrying out the new policy and its further elaboration. When the great upsurge in the Popular Front movement engulfed France and Spain in 1936 part of the labour movement there began to think that socialist revolution was just around the corner and that an appropriate platform ought to be set out. The Executive Committee, however, carefully analysed the situation and pointed to the tremendous differences in their circumstances, emphasising that anti-fascist democratic changes were rather the order of the day. The idea of bringing the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Spain to a conclusion and establishing a Popular Front government was confirmed at sessions of the Executive Committee Presidium and Secretariat when debating the Spanish issue in late May 1936.

The Comintern and communist parties saw the brilliant victory of the Popular Front in the French parliamentary election of early May 1936 and the Popular Front triumph in Spain, followed by the fight against the fascist putsch, as events that confirmed the profound veracity and vitality of the Seventh Congress decisions.

The fact that Spanish workers opposing the insurrectionists had obtained weapons was of immense importance. The positions of the working class in the social struggle gained considerable ground. Yet the Executive Committee advised Spanish comrades not to depart from the democratic republic positions. Any attempt to pose the question at that stage of setting up Soviets and establishing proletarian power, Dimitrov told the Executive Committee, would be a fatal mistake; the forces of the working class alone were insufficient to bring down fascism; it was necessary to maintain unity both with the petty bourgeoisie and the peasant masses and the radical intellectuals on the basis of establishing and strengthening the democratic republic at that stage with the complete rout of the fascist counter-revolutionary elements.¹ That piece of advice was put forward for contemplation when tackling all specific issues, including nationalisation of industry, confiscation of property and organisation of the army.

¹ See K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934—1939)*, p. 147.

Only implementation of the Popular Front policy could ensure fascism's defeat and the further development of revolution.

In French conditions, too, as the Executive Committee underlined, triumph of the Popular Front parties opened the way for energetic implementation of its programme, yet it did not yet provide sufficient grounds for advancing the slogan of a transition to socialist revolution. That slogan would be premature also because the country had not yet reached the objectives of anti-fascist democratic stage of the struggle, and because the socialist revolution slogan in those circumstances would have split the Popular Front and caused the defection of the middle strata and part of the working class; all that would have led to the defeat of the working people.

At sessions of the supreme forums of the Comintern Executive Committee between 16 and 19 September 1936, revolution in Spain was assessed as a thorough-going democratic revolution taking place under such a strong impact of the working class and other working people that its result could no longer be a bourgeois-democratic republic. The new power was seen as one going beyond a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and at the same time as a power relying on wider social forces. Participants in the discussion—Dimitrov, Manuilsky, Thorez, Kuusinen, Harry Pollitt and Victorio Codovilla—proceeded from Lenin's idea that one should not reduce the entire multiplicity of revolutions to a schematic counterposing of the bourgeois to the proletarian revolution, that there could be different forms "of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution".¹ The creative thinking of Communists had already seen the first really clear opportunity for establishing a transitional regime that would prepare the ground for the socialist stage of the struggle.

Summing up the debate, Georgi Dimitrov formulated a number of ideas with utmost consistency. He said that given the prevailing balance of class forces in the world, given the existence of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and fascist dictatorships in several large states, on the other, given the contemporary class relations, the question of a bourgeois-democratic revolution and a bourgeois-democratic state should be faced up differently than hitherto. The Spanish Republic for whose triumph the people were fighting, should it prevail "would be a special state with a genuine popular democracy. It would not yet be a Soviet state, but an anti-fascist, left-wing state with the participation of the truly left-wing part of the bourgeoisie."² Dimitrov opposed the old notions that a state by its very content was invariably either capitalist or socialist, in so far as

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1974, p. 92.

² See *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 3, 1969, p. 13.

circumstances demonstrated that there arose transitional forms on the way to a socialist state which could exist for a relatively protracted period of revolutionary development. He went on to say that a democratic state was now coming into being where "Popular Front has a decisive influence". We should not be prisoners of old, social-democratic or sectarian ideas that such a democratic republic cannot exist.

In general outline the socio-economic and political structure of the state and people's democratic regime was defined. Here it "is a matter of organising production without destroying completely private capitalist ownership. Production should be organised with the participation and under the control of the working class and its allies... i.e., the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry. Theoretically, this perhaps would correctly be expressed as a special form of democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry."¹

Owing to the appearance in print of a publication dealing with the issue of the Spanish revolution in the old way, the Executive Committee instructed Togliatti swiftly to prepare an article reflecting the Committee's conclusions. On 16 October 1936 *Pravda* published his article "On the Distinctive Features of the Spanish Revolution", showing that a new type of democratic republic was being born in Spain, a "new democracy" in which "the material basis of fascism would be destroyed" and there would be created "guarantees for further economic and political gains for the working people".² José Díaz, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, also noted that "We are fighting for a democratic republic, for a new type of democratic ... republic,"³ in which the roots of fascism and reaction would be destroyed along with the rule of privileged classes, and there would open up the road to further socio-economic progress for the working people.

The anti-fascist democratic revolution trained its main fire not so much on vestiges of feudal relations (although this was also important in Spain) as on the most reactionary segment of large-scale capital. This revolution reflected a new level of relationship between the general democratic and socialist tasks and possessed, consequently, a huge anti-capitalist potential. It goes without saying that Communists proceeded from the notion that no specific socio-economic formation existed between capitalism and socialism, but that transitions to socialism could differ greatly; Popular Front government and people's democracy were perceived as the connecting link between the anti-fascist struggle and the socialist objective.

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Pravda*, 16 October 1936.

³ *The Communist International*, No. 4, Vol. XIV, 1937, p. 1001.

Establishment of a foundation to the theory of anti-fascist democratic revolution had been the result of latest experience in the struggle of the working class and its allies, a creative development of Marxism-Leninism and Leninist ideas concerning democratic revolution growing into socialist revolution, concerning the forms of approach or transition to proletarian revolution.

The upsurge in the campaign for a Popular Front in France between 1936 and 1937, and the national revolutionary war in Spain signified that the Popular Front policy had begun to pass the practical test, enriching and expanding that mainstream along which the struggle of the working class and all working people in capitalist countries was to proceed in the future.

The Comintern Executive Committee paid considerable attention to programmes of political change put forward by Communists in Spain and France. It approved Spanish Communists' participation in the Popular Front government; it frequently gave counsel and recommendations on strengthening that party's cooperation with other Popular Front parties on a governmental level and on arranging cooperation with anarcho-syndicalists. Meanwhile, it stressed that a communist party should act as the most consistent force in the Popular Front and the entire anti-fascist struggle, should invest in that struggle a firm organising principle, isolating the capitulators and waverers,¹ restraining the pseudo-revolutionary adventure-seeking of the ultra-left, and proposing a clear-cut policy to the people in the interests of the working class and all working people.¹

Having analysed the events in Spain, the fight for a Popular Front in France and elsewhere, the communist movement set out as a paramount task of anti-fascist democratic regimes the profound democratisation of the state apparatus, including the abolition of that part of it which had fulfilled the function of violent repression of the people; the renewing of state bodies in the executive, legislative and judicial areas; and the inclusion in the state apparatus of new structures and forms engendered by the popular struggle itself. In attributing considerable importance to those new structures, the Comintern suggested setting up and reinforcing the Popular Front organisation from below, starting with local committees, right up to the top—to the Popular Front national committee.

Particular attention was paid to the army in constructing a new state. The Popular Front platforms proposed by communist parties had put forward a demand to democratise the army as a vital and integral part of the democratisation process in politics.² Spanish

¹ See M. T. Meshcheryakov, *All Life's Struggle* (José Díaz), Moscow, 1976, pp. 107-15 (in Russian).

² See *Kommunist*, No. 2, 1969, pp. 6-9.

experience showed that it was the Communists who had produced the most effective programme for building the republican army and energetically worked for its implementation.¹

The Comintern constantly supported the policy pursued by the Communist Party of Spain in concentrating the forces of the working class and the entire Popular Front on defeating the fascist putsch, inasmuch as only victory in the war could ensure complete triumph of the democratic revolution, the establishment of people's democratic power and its conversion to working-class power. That thesis was emphasised in a decision of the Comintern Executive Committee Secretariat on 19 September 1936. The letter sent by Soviet leaders on 21 December 1936 to F. Largo Caballero's government proposed consolidation of all popular forces for defeating the insurrectionists and Italian-German interventionists.² Without victory in war there could be no victory in revolution—that was the Spanish communist slogan. It certainly corresponded to the realities of the situation.

The Comintern and communist parties formulated a programme of changes to be implemented by the Popular Front or anti-fascist democratic regime, depending on the specific historical circumstances and, above all, on the level of popular struggle. For example, the popular unity programme in France did not envisage the immediate dismantling of monopoly capital power, but contained the initial steps in that direction, proclaiming the nationalisation of the Bank of France and the war industry, democratic state regulation of the major branches of production, tax reform and other measures to combat unemployment.³

The Executive Committee eagerly approved the programme of measures proposed by the French Party which would steadily lead to the undermining of finance oligarchy power. At the same time, it advised the party to take account of the overall economic situation when pursuing these measures, and not to allow their implementation to provoke the walk-out by middle strata from the Popular Front. At a session of the ECCI Secretariat in the summer of 1936, Dimitrov said on that subject that reaction would step up attacks on the Popular Front government, especially on those measures that affect big capital's positions. He said that capital has power, has the potential to undermine the positions of that government by attacking the Popular Front, to create an atmosphere of no confidence in the Popular Front. Dimitrov said it was important to tell the people

¹ See S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, 1931-1939*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 147-49 (in Russian).

² See *War and Revolution in Spain, 1936-1939*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1968, pp. 419-20 (in Russian).

³ *L'Humanité*, 11 January 1936.

the truth and propose measures both in parliament and government so as to counter those reactionary attempts in time.¹

The democratic republic of a new type in Spain naturally accomplished more deep-going social and economic changes than Léon Blum's government in France. There too, however, Communists proceeded from interests of consolidating all republican forces and therefore opposed undue haste in nationalising monopolies and sequestering land. That found expression in many documents of the Comintern and of the Communist Party of Spain.²

The fight to implement the political and socio-economic demands of the Popular Front in France and Spain was the first practical test of real ways towards a popular democratic republic. The experience enriched the tactics and strategy of the international communist and labour movement.

Communists took account of the possibility of creating various transitional types of governments between normal bourgeois government and proletarian power. The ECCI Secretariat session on 5 June 1936, for example, pointed out that one should distinguish on that course the following: 1) a left-wing bourgeois government; 2) a government depending on a Popular Front but not yet a Popular Front government; 3) a Popular Front government. The lines drawn between those types should not be seen as set once and for all.³ Mobility of forms of political power at the stage of the general democratic and anti-fascist revolution—from left-wing bourgeois government at the outset of that stage to popular front government embodying anti-fascist democracy of the concluding stage—patently showed the transitional nature of the anti-fascist phase of the struggle.

The attitude of Communists to a Popular Front government and governments relying on a Popular Front was also defined. The question of the French Communist Party taking part in government came in for two detailed discussions in the Executive Committee. Communists had linked their participation in government with the scale of popular struggle and the process of conversion of the government into an effective Popular Front government. They believed, however, it politically inexpedient and premature to enter into a left-wing bourgeois government or even into a government relying on a Popular Front if and when the lack of maturity of struggle and the balance of political forces corresponding to it would doom the party to being an appendage of reformist and left-wing bourgeois parties.

¹ See *Georgi Dimitrov—Outstanding Leninist Revolutionary*, Moscow, 1974 p. 158 (in Russian).

² See *The Seventh Congress of the Communist International and the Fight Against Fascism and War (Collected Documents)*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 442, 453 (in Russian).

³ See *From Comintern History*, Moscow, 1970, p. 152 (in Russian).

In the dire situation of national revolutionary war in Spain the Communist Party took governmental responsibility upon itself. The document it adopted at the end of 1936, known as "Eight Conditions of Victory", stressed the aspiration of Communists to promote cooperation at all levels, including government, with all republicans.

Experience showed that communist participation in the Popular Front government played an immense positive part in furthering the anti-fascist struggle, in implementing democratic change and strengthening the unity of all anti-fascists.

A most awkward issue of anti-fascist policy was to define the main political goal of workers' struggle in accordance with the situation obtaining in a particular country.

Taking account of the balance of class forces in countries with bourgeois parliamentary regimes, Communists came to the conclusion that in most of those countries the strategy of setting up anti-fascist democratic regimes could not be implemented overnight by dint of objective reasons. Besides, most of the people had not yet appreciated the need for attaining that goal. So the immediate political objective was to establish a Popular Front so as to achieve an overall political shift to the left, the formation of left-wing bourgeois or social democratic governments that could carry through vigorous measures against domestic and foreign fascism and could meet the immediate social and economic needs of the working people and middle strata of the populace. The need to specify that common objective was stressed, defining communist parties' attitudes to social democratic governments or to governments with social democratic participation. The Comintern Executive Committee's advice was to take as flexible as possible an attitude to such a government and to utilise the influence of mass organisations on it for getting the government and parliament to take various steps in the interests of the working people. At the same time, together with the tactics of putting pressure on such a government, communist parties were also to use tactics of backing certain of its measures that opposed reaction and fascism.

In countries with a total fascist dictatorship as well as those with fascist-type regimes and fascistised regimes, the slogan of fighting for an anti-fascist democratic Popular Front republic that would pave the way for working-class power relatively swiftly was also out of the question as a direct political objective.

Taking ECCI advice, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany prepared in June 1936 "Directives for Providing a German Popular Front Political Platform" in which it proposed underpinning the Popular Front programme with the idea that the "new state would be a democratic republic in which the people

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would be free to decide all questions of the economy, home and foreign policy, while the government would be established by the decision of the working people on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret elections".¹ The party believed that objective and subjective factors required first passing through the phase of profound general democratic struggle that would create the prerequisites for a socialist revolution. By putting up the slogan of a democratic republic as the main political objective, the party was seeing the general democratic, anti-fascist stage of revolution not only as a certain phase of the fight to bring down the Nazi dictatorship, but also as a form of government to be established after it.

The session for the Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee on 11 May 1936 approved a letter to be sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria that said, "To mobilise the common people to overthrow the fascist dictatorship, the Communist Party of Austria should advance the slogan of a democratic republic. The party should remember that the balance of class forces in Austria does not at the present time put the fight for a proletarian dictatorship on the agenda."²

The creation of an anti-fascist democratic republic was the chief political objective of the anti-fascist struggle in many countries, even though specific political slogans depended on the balance of class forces and the circumstances in each country.

For example, the Italian Communist Party kept in mind that the democratic republic slogan had helped Communists, Socialists and Republicans to come closer together, leaving anti-fascist elements who were not republicans outside the Popular Front movement, and focused attention in the direct struggle on the immediate political demands of winning democratic liberties and fulfilling the social promises of the 1919 fascist programme.³ The Bulgarian Communist Party's Central Committee did not formulate the demand for a democratic republic at its plenary meeting of February 1936, but put forward instead the slogan of immediate restoration of the Tirnovo constitution and the rights and freedoms inscribed in it. By doing so the Communists counted on "uniting in a Popular Front all non-fascist forces, including monarchy supporters, for eradicating the unbearable situation in the country caused by fascist ruling groups, and for restoring the people's legitimate rights and freedoms".⁴

¹ *Die Internationale* (Prague), Book 1/2, 1937, p. 79.

² See *The Communist Movement in the Vanguard of the Fight for Peace, National and Social Emancipation. To the Fortieth Anniversary of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, p. 156.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

⁴ *History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 388-90 (in Russian).

Communist parties in the colonies and dependencies also formulated their strategic objectives anew, emphasising the prime place of national liberation, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal objectives in the struggle of the downtrodden people of the colonies and semi-colonies. The people were being mobilised there for setting up national anti-imperialist fronts. The Comintern Executive Committee had a salient part to play in bringing about this turn round and defining the particular content of the united anti-imperialist front policy in the countries of the region.¹

The fight to unite anti-fascist forces within the framework of the Popular Front meant resolving the questions of what social and political forces could enter the Popular Front in a particular country, in what forms, how exactly that unity could be achieved and what slogans ought to be put forward for those purposes.

The Executive Committee leadership said it was necessary to work for unity within the framework of a Popular Front of different classes, social strata, groups and political trends. When it noticed a tendency in some countries for communist parties to attain concerted action only with the left wing of other anti-fascist parties and organisations, the Comintern sharply opposed that tendency, calling it a vestige of leftism and sectarianism in politics which threatened to deepen the split in the democratic camp.² At the same time, it roundly condemned attempts to build a Popular Front as a usual alliance headed by non-fascist bourgeois parties. Earl Browder, a CPUSA leader, made precisely such attempts, maintaining that forces surrounding President Roosevelt and the Democratic Party should be the centre of the Popular Front, while the front organisationally was not to go beyond the bounds of that party. During the discussion of these issues in the Executive Committee in the spring of 1937 and early 1938, Dimitrov, Manuilsky and others indicated the danger of following in the footsteps of Roosevelt's policy, idealising it. The Communist Party USA was recommended to combine the fight to set up a broad worker-farmer party as a form of Popular Front with support for progressive movements within the Democratic Party.³ The Comintern Executive Committee advised it to back Roosevelt's progressive slogans and measures that met the working people's interests, but frankly to criticise any steps he took that ran counter to those interests.

In deciding how wide a Popular Front could be in a particular

¹ See Chapter 7 of this volume for greater detail.

² See *The Seventh Comintern Congress and the Fight to Establish a Popular Front in the Countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 205-07 (in Russian).

³ See K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War*, pp. 226-27, 345-46.

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country the Comintern and communist parties based themselves on a circumspect analysis of the balance of class forces. In Latin America, for example, there could be a Popular Front close in essence to a united anti-imperialist front yet, at the same time, having a big input of anti-feudal, anti-oligarchical objectives aimed against the relatively strong local reaction of latifundists and the proimperialist bourgeoisie.¹

Various left-wing bourgeois alliances were arising in several countries during the anti-fascist struggle. The Comintern and communist parties saw negative sides to the activity of such alliances, their vacillation, their fear of furthering a broad mass struggle against fascism and reaction, their inclination to make compromises with reactionary bourgeois parties. Nevertheless, Communists viewed pacts with those alliances generally as a possible step on the way to creating a Popular Front. They felt that such pacts enabled them to affect the development of the alliances and to help them move towards a Popular Front platform. They therefore worked hard to get all progressive parties and organisations, as well as trade unions, to join those alliances.²

Their flexible tactics helped the communist parties more closely to link up with the people opposed to fascism, to come into contact with peasant parties and to have considerable impact on left-wing alliances in a number of countries.

The Comintern and communist parties always singled out as a key issue the establishment and strengthening of a united workers' front, since only such a front could be the backbone of a firm anti-fascist alliance of forces. The Executive Committee advocated the greatest possible flexibility of communist party attitude towards social democratic parties, the use of every favourable opportunity for practically drawing workers' parties close together in anti-fascist struggle and altering social democratic policy in an anti-fascist spirit. Without drawing a veil over the errors of social democracy, communist parties should, said the Executive Committee, support within social democratic policy everything that even partially met the interests of the working people.

Communist parties also consistently pursued a policy of trade union unity. After the outright refusal by reformist leaders in Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Switzerland and some other countries to hold talks on joining forces with revolutionary alliances, the communist parties advised members of revolutionary alliances to enter individually or collectively into the existing reformist trade unions.

¹ See Georgi Dimitrov—*Outstanding Figure in the Communist Movement*, p. 263.

² For greater detail, see K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War*, pp. 204-07, 227-29.

In Germany, Italy, Austria and elsewhere work was done on setting up illegal anti-fascist trade unions. Meanwhile Communists in those countries were using the slightest legal possibilities within the fascist trade unions to promote the working-class cause.

The Comintern recommended communist parties to work to turn certain echelons of the fascist trade unions into support points of class struggle and anti-fascist movement. As a result, they managed to preserve or even extend areas of anti-fascist resistance within the fascist unions of Germany, Italy and Austria. In Bulgaria, meanwhile, Communists succeeded in winning over grass-roots and even intermediate echelons in the state (fascist) trade unions and, consequently, creating one of the most important supports for a united workers' front.¹ Efforts were made to achieve international trade union unity.²

A major plank in the communist campaign for working-class unity was the policy of uniting workers' parties. Communists, however, were not trying to force the process artificially; they were convinced that unity was only possible through the complete abandonment by Social Democrats of the policy of class collaboration and their change to Marxist-Leninist positions. And the rate of that change depended both on the development of the mass struggle of the working class, and on conscious efforts by left Socialists and the correct tactics used by Communists. Thus, while approving the stand taken by the Communist Party of Spain in setting up a united revolutionary party, the Comintern Executive Committee emphasised that the merging of the Communist Party with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party would be decided not so much in talks with left-wing leaders of the latter as in the course of mass struggle in town and country, as Socialists acquired Marxist-Leninist ideas. The Executive Committee advised Spanish Communists not to force a merger with the Socialist Party, but to proceed from the paramount principle of combining action of both parties at all levels against the interventionists and insurrectionists. In France, too, the idea to set up a joint party gained broad approval among the SFIO members and in 1937 there arose from below in dozens of towns joint PCF-SFIO sections, calling themselves socialist-communist sections. The French Communist Party, however, did not bring to the forefront the objective of setting up a united party, believing that the overriding goal was to promote concerted action by the working class and to strengthen the Popular Front.

In other countries where social democratic influence predominated in the labour movement, the way to a united revolutionary workers'

¹ G. Radev, *Yedinyat proletarski front 1934-1939* (United Proletarian Front 1934-1939), Sofia, 1967, pp. 108-84 (in Bulgarian).

² See Chapter 3 of this volume.

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party was, of course, harder and longer and could pass through a whole number of stages. One of those stages could be the joining by a communist party of a social democratic party as a collective member while retaining political independence. That was the tactical picture that began to emerge, for example, in Great Britain where the Communist Party wanted to join the Labour Party. Clearly, as a result of that merger, the Labour Party was not going to become a revolutionary party overnight, it would be merely a form of a united worker's front, yet this would create the prerequisites for it to be renovated.

The active struggle to set up a universal peace front against fascist aggression was an inalienable part of the new communist policy. In his speech at the Executive Committee Presidium session (23 March-1 April 1936) Dimitrov set the task of working out, on the fundamental platform of the Seventh Comintern Congress, a specific programme of fighting against war, a programme that corresponded to the new situation. Conclusions were formulated during the session on ways to consolidate all peace-loving forces, on the need to overcome the adverse attitude of Communists towards defensive measures by bourgeois governments of those countries which were threatened by a fascist invasion, on a communist platform concerning defence against the fascist aggression and the setting up of a collective security system.

The ECCI Presidium Decision of 1 April 1936 stressed that "*bridling the fascist architects of war and fighting for peace is now the main task of the international working class*".¹ The communist parties pledged themselves to tie in defence questions in their countries as closely as possible with demands to extend workers' democratic rights, to democratise the armed forces and purge them of fascist and reactionary elements, and to meet the pressing demands of workers and peasants.

The Comintern once again announced its readiness to work with the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) and the Amsterdam International (International Federation of Trade Unions) to set up a worldwide pact on mutual assistance involving the USSR.

Those decisions, in whose elaboration the CPSU(B) and other communist parties had made a considerable contribution, specified and developed several ideas voiced at the Seventh Congress on the struggle for peace, provided a theoretical underpinning to communist active policy on defence against fascist aggression and outlined a National Front policy for repulsing that aggression.

The ECCI Presidium decision was theoretically important also because it formulated initial criteria for determining the nature of the impending war. It pointed out that the new circumstances were

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, March 1969, Vol. 12, p. 1.

not like the 1914 situation: "Now there are (1) a proletarian state, the main bulwark of peace; (2) definite fascist aggressors (Germany, Italy, Japan); (3) a number of countries directly threatened by fascist aggression, loss of statehood and national independence (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Austria, etc.); (4) other capitalist states (France, USA, etc.), which at present have a definite stake in preserving peace."¹ The presence of those factors meant that the new world war that fascism and imperialist groups were preparing had to be by nature more complex and contradictory than the first, and that it would have right from the outset both imperialist and liberation, anti-fascist tendencies.

In the situation where imperialist reaction and fascism were heading full steam for world war, the Comintern and communist parties explained to the people of their countries that Soviet foreign policy was intended to guarantee the interests of the socialist state and the whole of world socialism, and therefore simultaneously corresponded to the aspirations both of the revolutionary workers in all nations and of all democratic forces and peace advocates. A central place in communist policy was held by slogans of campaigning for collective security, concluding treaties on mutual aid with the USSR (along the lines of the Franco-Soviet and Soviet-Czechoslovak pacts), supporting the Soviet peace policy and establishing a close alliance with the USSR.

The change by fascist powers to direct acts of aggression (Italy's take-over of Ethiopia, the German-Italian intervention in Spain, the Nazi seizure of Austria and the Sudetenland and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia) confronted the labour and democratic movements with the urgent task of organising resistance to that aggression. The Comintern and communist parties exerted every effort to mobilise peace movement supporters to set up a lasting collective security system, to ally firmly with the USSR, to achieve concerted action by international workers' organisations for combating war and fascism, and to promote specific campaigns in defence of the Spanish Republic and other victims of fascist aggression.

The Communist International led the implementation of measures to render military assistance to the Spanish Republic, paid constant attention to the creation and operations of the International Brigades that had come to the aid of the Spanish people fighting for their Republic and became the embodiment of a militant Popular Front on an international scale. It persistently sought agreement with LSI leaders on joint aid to the Spanish Republic. Negotiations between Comintern representatives and LSI leaders in the summer of 1937 bore fruit.² However, leaders of international social democ-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

² See *The Communist International*, Nos. 5-6, 1937, Vol. 14, pp. 1074-75.

racy did nothing practically to implement the agreement, and soon after right-wing LSI leaders veered towards de facto support for a policy of appeasing the fascist aggressors, as pursued by ruling circles in the West.

Communists exposed the Munich Agreement as an imperialist collusion against world peace, as the gravest blow to a collective security policy, a blow to the policy of Popular Front, to the forces of peace and democracy, to the peace movement; it was a step in the direction of world war. The Executive Committee recommended communist parties to step up the effort to unite all patriotic forces against the fascist aggressors, to bridle reactionary imperialist cliques and capitulators in their own countries, to pursue a common international working-class policy against war, and to reinforce the alliance of nations and peoples with the USSR—the bastion of peace, democracy, socialism and national independence.

In the new circumstances, the Comintern and communist parties were in favour of extending the Popular Front policy, attracting to it all patriotic forces capable of standing up to fascist aggression and fighting for the national interests of their peoples. The ECCI adopted resolutions approving the policy of national unity within the Spanish Republic (3 September 1938), of establishing a front for the defence of independence of the Republic in Czechoslovakia (May 1938), of the campaign for a national front in France and the smaller European states threatened by Nazi aggression. Communists saw the possibility of establishing democratic-patriotic alliances, fronts or movement in several countries, which could attract wide groups of the populace and even those patriotic elements in the bourgeoisie who up till then had been passive or had sided with the ruling groupings.

The national front policy was the only alternative to the advance of the forces of fascism and war; any other political course, any attempt to find a road to peace through pacts with the aggressors led to catastrophe.

After the Munich sell-out, the national front policy became the determining and key policy of the Comintern and communist parties. In reviewing its salient aspects, the Comintern Executive Committee drew the attention of communist parties to the need to step up the fight to strengthen defence capacity of nations over whom hung the Nazi sword of Damocles. The search began for new forms of consolidating the anti-fascist and patriotic forces, putting pressure on governments so as to awaken them to defend the independence of their countries and to hold talks with the USSR on collective security.

Resistance by right-wing Social Democrats backing directly or indirectly government policy of connivance with the aggressors, how-

ver, paralysed all efforts at creating a united anti-fascist and anti-war front of the international working class.

A certain difficulty arose within the communist movement itself owing to the Stalin personality cult and the adverse circumstances bound up with it, unjustified repression of some people in the international communist movement and the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland. The negative consequences of the Stalin cult nonetheless did not alter the socialist essence of the Soviet social system; they certainly could not justify sabotage by right-wing social democratic leaders of the paramount historical task of establishing the international united workers' front against fascism and war. Refusal by the great bulk of social democratic parties to act jointly with Communists and to countenance a Popular Front, their departure from the policy of establishing collective security, unwillingness to help mobilise people for independent action against reaction, fascism and war instigators, as well as their anti-communism all combined to undermine the efforts and potential of the labour movement.

The policy hammered out by the communist movement in creating a united workers', popular and national front was the only possible way of repulsing fascism and the forces of war. The battle to implement that policy was of enormous historical significance.

The communist policy became the core of organised resistance to fascist advance in a number of countries, especially France and Spain. All of that seriously hampered fascism's advance and the fulfilment of its plans to launch war, prevented it from occupying the best strategic positions to which it was aspiring before the war.

Under the slogans of struggle for a united workers' and broad Popular Front, for realisation of the Popular Front programme, the working people of many countries gained considerable social victories. The working class shored up its relations with its natural allies, enhanced its role as a class that most consistently safeguarded the interests of all who suffered from monopoly tyranny.

The policy of united workers' and broad Popular Front, extended in the face of the direct threat of fascist aggression to a national front policy, brought about an upsurge in several countries in the nationwide patriotic movement aimed at safeguarding the freedom and independence of peoples from fascist aggressor servitude; it encouraged the formation throughout the world of anti-fascist public opinion. It also helped prepare the working class and all anti-fascists and patriots for the impending armed struggle with fascism, and for close cooperation with the USSR in that struggle. The carrying out of that policy showed the mounting role of the working class in national development and defence of national interests.

The communist effort for a united workers' and broad Popular

Front during the 1930s was implementation of the new strategy that enriched the policy and promoted battle readiness of the communist movement. The Comintern and communist parties were accumulating experience in fighting for Popular Front regimes as regimes that were preparing the ground for advance towards socialist change. And even though the first Popular Front governments—in Spain, France and Chile—were unable for various reasons to develop far enough and achieve a degree of maturity that would enable them to become governments of transition to socialist revolution, events demonstrated their huge potential for anti-fascist democratic transformation and for preparing conditions for a change to socialism. Elaboration of fundamentals of anti-fascist and democratic revolutionary theory was a major contribution by the Comintern to advancing Marxism-Leninism and communist strategy.

The united workers' and anti-fascist Popular Front policy made an immense contribution to the ideological and political preparation of Communists for carrying out the policy of anti-fascist national fronts and patriotic fronts during the grave years of armed struggle against fascism; it also helped prepare the communist parties for accomplishing people's democratic and socialist revolutions between 1944 and 1949.¹

THE GERMAN PROLETARIAT'S ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE

In Germany the 1929-1933 economic crisis led to particularly profound social and political upheavals. The economic slump in the country plumbed greater depths than in any other European developed capitalist state, for various reasons. Germany also broke the European record in unemployment levels. By the beginning of 1933, according to official figures, the number of jobless was approaching nine million, which comprised half of the workforce.² Meanwhile, the miserly unemployment benefit went to no more than 20 per cent of the total number of unemployed.³ In no other country did the crisis probably cause such dire consequences for the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, salaried workers and small farmers. The ranks of the jobless were constantly being swollen by artisans, construction workers, the owners of handicraft businesses, retailers and men and women of the liberal professions. That category of the unemployed was virtually deprived fully of the right to benefits. The material

¹ See B. N. Ponomarev, "Georgi Dimitrov in the Fight Against Fascism and War During World War II", *Reminiscences of Georgi Dimitrov*, Sofia, 1972, pp. 258-75.

² *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 4, Berlin, 1966, p. 335.

³ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 30, 7 July 1932, Vol. 12, p. 606; No. 39, 1 September 1932, Vol. 12, p. 829.

position of the employed white and blue collar workers was slightly better. Everywhere real wages and salaries fell sharply, taxes rose and exploitation increased.

The economic crisis, troubles and privations that fell upon the working people, the self-centred policy of the bourgeoisie openly relying on repression, and the Nazi terror¹ caused a polarisation of class forces and greater working-class struggle. Communists were in the forefront of that struggle everywhere.

The unemployed movement displayed an enormous amount of activity, the strike campaign went on unflinching, and mass protest demonstrations and hunger marches took place. In October 1930 Berlin had as many as 130,000 metal workers on strike; they were joined by workers in a number of other branches of industry. In 1931 the most momentous event in the country's political life was the miners strike in the Ruhr and Upper Silesia in which some 300,000 miners took part. The high spot of the movement was the Berlin transport workers strike involving 22,000 people in November 1932 which bore a blatantly political character and paralysed the entire transport system of the capital, the largest in Europe.²

The massive and solid resistance by workers to the onslaught of capital and their obvious determination to fight caused profound alarm among the bourgeoisie. In so far as the means of economic and political pressure, used within the bounds of the bourgeois constitution, had had no effect on the working class, monopoly bourgeois groups swung to a policy of establishing a "strong power" and abolishing parliamentary democracy. Of course, that occurred to the accompaniment of a certain amount of in-fighting among the bourgeoisie itself. But the German bourgeoisie, which had been scared stiff by the November Revolution, was generally more prone than other detachments of the bourgeoisie to resort to the assistance of extreme reaction in order to preserve its sovereignty. The chief barrier that obstructed those plans was the labour movement. All the same, the policy of class collaboration and anti-communism pursued by social democratic leaders and the rift in the working class presented imperialist reaction with ample opportunities to encroach upon democracy.

When the coalition government of the Social Democrat Hermann Müller gave way to a new administration headed by the Centre Faction leader Heinrich Brüning in March 1930, the new regime began systematically to undermine the bourgeois parliamentary system. Cleverly playing on the social democratic leaders' fear of mass extra-parliamentary struggle and their predilection for bourge-

¹ Ernst Thälmann, *Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 2, Berlin, 1956, pp. 521-22.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 51, 17 November 1932, Vol. 12, p. 1102.

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ois legality, Brüning steadily demolished the Reichstag authority and extended the prerogatives of executive power.

The bourgeoisie did not confine its policy to legality; the Nazi Party backed by finance and industry magnates was rapidly on the move. The fascists, who had called themselves the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), were widely resorting to social demagogy, launching virulently chauvinistic and anti-communist agitation. They promised workers to do away with unemployment and to set a just wage, small farmers—to lessen the burden of debt and stop land auctioning, small traders and artisans—to close down department stores and to remove high interest indebtedness. They played on German national pride wounded by the Versailles Treaty, calling for "justice" and the rebirth of Germany's military prestige; they whipped up a vicious racism and anti-Semitism. The Nazis drew into their ranks mainly petty-bourgeois strata brought to despair by the economic crisis, and members of the military caste and déclassé elements; they created numerous armed formations, terrorised proletarian organisations, whipped up tension and uncertainty and fear amongst the people.

In banking on fascism, imperialist reaction saw it as a means of preventing revolution. Fascism had promised also to become the strike force against the Soviet Union. Having overcome a certain hostility to the anti-capitalist demagogy of the Nazis and having obtained appropriate assurances, influential magnates from the late 1920s had begun to subsidise the Nazi Party which enabled it substantially to strengthen its position.

The Reichstag elections in September 1930 reflected the sharp polarisation of political forces. The number of votes given to the Communist Party (KPD) was 4.6 million (1.33 million more than in 1928), with a clear majority of the electorate voting communist in Berlin. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) picked up 8.6 million votes. Meanwhile the number of votes that went to the Nazis (NSDAP) climbed steeply, increasing eightfold over the 1928 figure and amounting to over 6.4 million (18.3 per cent of the vote).¹ The fascist danger had risen sharply.

With the Nazi threat mounting, the KPD put forward urgently the idea of creating a broad anti-imperialist, anti-fascist front. At its Central Committee plenary meeting in October 1929, Thälmann emphasised that the big capitalists were reorganising the Nazi Party; he described it as the instrument of the monopolies.² The Communist

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Berlin, 1966, Vol. 2, pp. 259-60.

² Klaus Mammach, "Bemerkungen über die Wende der KPD zum Kampf gegen den Faschismus", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, No. 4, 1963, p. 664.

Party opposed the nationalistic, revanchist fascist programme with its own "Programme for National and Social Emancipation of the German People" adopted in August 1930. The Programme exposed the demagogy of the Nazis in regard to "German socialism", appealed for the unity of all democratic forces on an anti-fascist platform and for the overthrow of monopoly power. It characterised the Nazi Party as a party of extreme reaction and war, showing that it obtained its support from the most reactionary groups of finance capital.¹ That was an important step on the way to working out strategy and tactics in tune with the new circumstances.

The presence in the KPD of the Heinz Neumann leftist sectarian group and its supporters who regarded social democracy as a faction of fascism complicated the campaign for a united anti-fascist front. The need to wage battle simultaneously on the capitulation of social democratic leaders and their rejection of concerted action against the fascists, and on sectarianism within the KPD's own ranks made its leaders' tasks more difficult. However, the party was overcoming these difficulties, doggedly searching for ways of uniting the working class and all democratic forces against the fascist advance. The Secretariat of the Party's Central Committee wrote in a letter that, "Our task is organisationally to consolidate as soon as possible all anti-fascist forces in the factories and beyond them into a broad mass movement."²

It particularly drew attention to the primary importance of establishing a united workers' front. "We call upon all social democratic workers, all Christian workers and those belonging to no parties to join hand with Communists to put an end to murderous fascism,"³ said the CC KPD appeal. In the autumn of 1930 the KPD initiated the creation of the Union of Struggle Against Fascism (Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus) that drew together detachments of anti-fascist self-defence. It increased its membership to 100,000 in the first half of 1931. Despite the ban by the SPD leadership, the Union was joined by social democratic workers as well.

In May 1931 the KPD drew up an ambitious plan for expanding worker employment that opened up the possibility of combined actions by workers and the unemployed. It also published the "Peasant Aid Programme" (*das Bauernhilfsprogramm*) envisaging the cancellation of the huge debt by small peasants, reduction in rent, the sequestration of landowners' property without compensation and division of land among poor peasants. The party also undertook other

¹ L. Berthold, *Das Programm der KPD zur nationalen und sozialen Befreiung des deutschen Volkes, vom August 1930*, Berlin, 1956.

² Quoted from L. I. Gintsberg, *Germany's Labour and Communist Movement in the Anti-Fascist Struggle (1919-1933)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 163 (in Russian).

³ *Die Rote Fahne*, 17 September 1930.

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measures to establish a lasting alliance between the working class and the peasants. In January 1932 the First German Peasant Congress was held in Berlin under communist leadership; it appealed for the setting up of peasant committees. The KPD was now growing in numbers (360,000 members in late 1932) and doing a great deal of ideological campaigning, explaining the mistakenness of "the worse the better" notion and of the widespread idea that if the fascists were to come to power they would immediately go bankrupt.

The Communist Party succeeded at that difficult time in strengthening links also with democratic anti-fascist intellectuals whose eminent members—Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Arnold Zweig, Kurt Tucholsky and Carl von Ossietzky—were conducting a vigorous campaign against the fascist threat. Anna Seghers and Ludwig Renn joined the ranks of communist writers. Bertolt Brecht came to prominence as author of anti-fascist plays and the well-known song *Solidarity*. Cultural and sports organisations led by Communists stepped up their activity.¹

In the spring of 1932, the KPD invited Social Democrats to put forward a common candidate for the presidential elections, expressing its readiness to support the Prussian social democratic leader Otto Braun. Yet the right-wing social democratic leadership so hated the idea of cooperating with Communists that it preferred not to run for the post of republican president at all. Back in 1925 social democratic leaders had announced that anyone voting for Hindenburg was a traitor; now they were calling on their members to cast their vote for him, thereby demonstrating utterly criminal short-sightedness.¹ Ernst Heilmann, Chairman of the social democratic faction in Prussia's landtag even went so far as to declare that Hindenburg "would never (!) be president ... under a national socialist government".² Less than a year later President Hindenburg was appointing Hitler Reichskanzler, and Heilmann died shortly after in a concentration camp.

Even at a time when, on 20 July, the von Papen government staged a putsch in Prussia and replaced the social democratic government, the social democratic leadership turned down joint action with the Communists. That act demoralised some of the party's supporters.

The KPD Central Committee published an appeal for Anti-Fascist Action on 26 May 1932, in which it called on the working class to strain every nerve "to stop the bloody plan of Hitler's fascism which

¹ See V. D. Kulbakin, *German Social Democracy, 1924-1932*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 216-227 (in Russian).

² L. I. Gintsberg, *On the Way to the Imperial Chancellery. German Fascism Strives for Power*, Moscow, 1972, p. 248 (in Russian).

wishes to establish overt fascist dictatorship in Germany."¹ It proposed measures for mass self-defence and the establishment of a united front of workers and all other strata of the population.

Ernst Thälmann had a lot to do with working out this new policy. As he told the Central Committee plenary meeting, "The establishment of a united proletarian front for revolutionary mass struggle against fascism has become a pressing need so as to bar the way to Hitler's fascism taking part in government. The question is now the extent to which we can, along with other methods well known to the Central Committee, use a great, new for Germany, special action."²

The Anti-Fascist Action movement spread throughout the country, gaining popularity even in the countryside. Communist leaders like Ernst Thälmann, Wilhelm Pieck, Walter Ulbricht and John Schehr spoke at dozens of meetings. They also met social democratic officials and, in response to their questions, elucidated the KPD position. The united front was no manoeuvre, they were at pains to emphasise, it was a sincere policy aimed at consolidating all proletarian forces.

Ernst Thälmann explained that Anti-Fascist Action was "an above-party union of all workers ready wholeheartedly to fight against fascism. It is not an organisation, but a mass movement." Difference of opinion on various issues ought not to divert people from the main issue: "The most urgent and vital question common to all workers is how to prevent a fascist dictatorship being established in Germany."³

At a meeting of German Young Communist League (KJVD) leaders in November 1932, Thälmann warned against overestimating the maturity of subjective conditions for revolution and expressed important thoughts on the need to find the correct tone in work with the mass of people and appropriate methods of political agitation. He called upon them to strengthen the sense of comradeship among workers: "The mass of people cannot be won over by a simple scheme, even a correct general policy is insufficient to do that, it is a question of using the right psychological methods and understanding people's psychology." The campaign for partial demands, said Thälmann, is an important stage in bringing the people to decisive battles. Criticising the lack of a desire on the part of some young Communists to work among young people already under fascist influence, Thälmann went on to say that "Naturally, it is easier and simpler to shout 'Beat the Fascists wherever you encounter them!' But, comrades, if it is so easy to beat them, why are their ranks growing?"

¹ *Die Antifaschistische Aktion. Dokumentation und Chronik, Mai 1932 bis Januar 1933*, Berlin, 1965, p. 33.

² *Ernst Thälmann, Eine Biographie*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 570-71.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 579.

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He appealed to young people to strengthen the united workers' front.¹

Joint Anti-Fascist Action committees began to come into being in various towns and cities, and conferences took place in the provinces. On 10 July 1932 Berlin was the venue for an Anti-Fascist Action Congress.

In striving to establish good, comradely relations with social democratic workers, Thälmann appealed to them specially with the words, "You, social democratic comrades, have joined the Anti-Fascist Action while still Social Democrats... We believe it when you say you are full of determination and ready to join us to do what you wish just as much as we Communists do, namely to smash fascism!"²

At the Reichstag elections on 31 July 1932, the KPD obtained some 5.4 million votes (gaining an extra 600,000) and some 6 million at the November polls. The Nazis, who had picked up some 13.8 million votes in July, had 11.7 million in November. That testified to the defection that was beginning of those strata in the population that had earlier been taken in by fascist propaganda. The obvious prospect of the NSDAP losing its grip caused alarm among the ruling classes and strengthened their resolve to accelerate a fascist coup.³

In January 1933 reactionary groups of monopoly capital and heads of the main bourgeois political organisations went behind the backs of the people to agree on transferring power to Hitler. True, they did have to neutralise resistance from the German proletariat, but the bourgeoisie was counting on the SPD leadership splitting activity since they had already prevented combined working class action to repulse fascism. On 28 January the Kurt von Schleicher government resigned. That event did not force the SPD to change tack: it continued to bank on a way out of the crisis by purely parliamentary means without resorting to mass action.

As a counterweight to those legalistic illusions of the Social Democrats, the KPD appealed for vigilance and a decisive rebuff to reaction. Between 20 July 1932 and 30 January 1933, the KPD many times proposed to SPD leaders and heads of other democratic organisations that they should all get together for organising a general political strike as a preventative measure capable of halting fascism in its tracks. During the critical weeks from late 1932 to early 1933 Thälmann warned workers and the whole working populace of Germany against cherishing illusory hopes for a peaceful

¹ Ernst Thälmann, *Eine Biographie*, pp. 624, 626.

² *Die Antifaschistische Aktion. Dokumentation und Chronik, Mai 1932 bis Januar 1933*, pp. 173-74.

³ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Vol. 2, pp. 296, 302; see also *The History of Fascism in Western Europe*, pp. 208-10.

settlement of the crisis, he exposed the calm assurances of the social democratic leaders and insistently called for united proletarian action.

On the day when Hitler was appointed Reichskanzler, 30 January 1933, the KPD Central Committee made a new appeal to the Social Democratic Party and the ADGB (General Federation of German Trade Unions) calling on them to join communist workers in nationwide anti-fascist action. The halting of work, mass protest demonstrations and other resolute actions could have forced the Nazis back off. But the communist appeal was rejected by social democratic leaders under the pretext that all efforts ought to be focused on purely constitutional, parliamentary action. All that happened was merely spasmodic joint actions, utterly insufficient.¹

Hitler's coming to power was no simple change of government. A "new order"—terrorist fascist dictatorship stamped itself on the country. It dealt a heavy blow not only to the German working class, but to the whole system of bourgeois-democratic institutions of the Weimar Republic. A party had come to power expressing the interests of the most aggressive groups of monopoly capital, whose main aim was to prepare for a new world war so as to establish German imperialism's world domination. Once they began to carry out the war preparations programme, the Nazis did all they could to whip up revanchist sentiment and put about ideas of German racial superiority.

The principal thrust of Nazi home policy was to smash the labour movement and other democratic forces. On 27 February 1933 the Nazis stage-managed the burning of the Reichstag. The Communists were accused of arson which had been actually done by the Nazis. That same night over 10,000 people were arrested, including a group of Bulgarian Communists headed by Georgi Dimitrov. By an emergency decree the country was declared to be in a state of siege.

Nonetheless, despite the monstrous terror, the fascists did not succeed in breaking the forces of the working class. In the Reichstag elections of 5 March, the KPD received 4.8 million votes and the SPD some 7.2 million; the Communists won 81 seats. Although the Nazis picked up 17.3 million votes they did not have an absolute majority.² To gain one, Hitler annulled the communist seats. On 23 March the Reichstag passed a law on emergency powers, thereby ensuring Hitler a completely free hand. The deep-going split in the working class as a result of the collusion with the bourgeoisie policy pursued by right-wing social democratic leaders hampered German working people from repulsing their vicious foes.

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, Berlin, 1966, pp. 13-15.

² *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Vol. 2, p. 316.

After Hitler's coming to power some of the Social democratic and trade union leaders still pinned their hopes on coming to terms with the fascist regime. The many years of adhering to parliamentary methods and lack of faith in the possibility of extra-parliamentary mass struggle had certainly left their mark. At the end of March 1933, Otto Wels, SPD Chairman, demonstratively resigned from membership of the Labour and Socialist International Bureau so as to distance himself from criticism of the fascist regime contained in LSI documents. During March, he, Stampfer and others paid a visit to several European countries with the intention of calming public opinion enraged by the fascist brutalities. In April a new SPD Board was elected, excluding people who had emigrated; a month later the social democrat faction in the Reichstag actually voted for Hitler's foreign policy. All the same, proclaiming readiness to cooperate with the Hitler administration did not save the Social Democratic Party. On 22 June 1933 it was outlawed along with other parties. The trade unions were "unified": the "Labour Front" was declared to be part of the NSDAP. On 20 January 1934 a national labour law was adopted, by which the factory owner was to be the supreme arbiter for workers on all issues concerning employment and production.

The social democratic leadership which had emigrated to Prague was forced to admit, "Social Democracy as the only organised force remaining intact [from the November Revolution.—*Ed.*] took over state power without resistance and from the outset began to work with the bourgeois state, with the old bureaucracy and even with the refurbished military apparatus. That it had taken over the old state apparatus almost without changing it was a gross historical mistake of the disoriented German labour movement during the war."¹

That self-criticism was superficial, however, and did not induce any practical conclusions. The SPD leadership recommended its supporters to adopt wait-and-see tactics, remaining as always deeply hostile to any cooperation with Communists.² The verbal repentance was not combined with any resolution to put an end to the schismatic policy. The woeful effect of that SPD policy had far-reaching consequences that hampered any real development of the anti-fascist struggle.

The Communist Party alone held fast to a consistently anti-fascist policy. On 6 February 1933 Wilhelm Pieck gave a press conference on behalf of the KPD Central Committee in which he reiterated the proposal to set up a united workers' front of Communists, Social

¹ Wolfgang Abendroth, *Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, Mainz, 1974, p. 116.

² *Klassenkampf, Tradition, Sozialismus*, Berlin, 1974, pp. 446-48.

Democrats, the General Confederation of German Trade Unions and Christian Trade Unions. The notion of worker unity and organisation of mass resistance to the fascist dictatorship permeated the decisions of the KPD Central Committee plenary meeting gathering illegally in Zeuten on 7 February 1933.¹

What was also of singular importance was Thälmann's insistence at the Central Committee plenary session that the overthrow of fascist dictatorship should not necessarily be seen as something akin to proletarian revolution in the country: "We are putting the question of the struggle for bringing down the Hitler regime, the question of demolishing the power of Hitler and Hugenberg as a direct objective."² That meant healing the rift in the labour movement and uniting all anti-fascist forces as the major terms for resolving the key issue—defeating fascism.

Thälmann sent an Open Letter to Social Democratic and Christian Workers of Germany, to Colleagues of the Free Trade Unions and Reichsbanner Comrades on 27 February, in which he declared, "On behalf of hundreds of thousands of members in the Communist Party, on behalf of more than 6 million working men and women and young workers who put their trust in the Communist Party at the recent Reichstag elections, I extend to you, members and officials of the SPD, the Free Trade Unions as well as the millions of non-party workers, a fraternal hand to join in the united fight against fascism... If we, working men and women and young workers, whose hands create all values, will fight together shoulder to shoulder, we shall overcome. If we fight together we shall succeed in drawing into a united front of anti-fascist freedom struggle the millions of poor farmers on the land, the millions of employees, civil servants and petty bourgeois in the cities."³

Forced to go underground, the KPD continued to fight. Thälmann, Scheer, Hermann Schubert, Fritz Schulte and Walter Ulbricht were put in charge of illegal work; the party was the only serious force in the anti-fascist movement within the country. The activity of Communists in Berlin and the industrial centres of Western Germany gradually began to adjust: illegal newspapers appeared, innumerable pamphlets were printed, some literature was obtained from abroad with immense difficulty. And on the walls of buildings appeared anti-fascist graffiti; red flags flew from factory chimneys. The fight

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, pp. 15, 16, 21, 23, 24.

² Ernst Thälmann, *Geschichte und Politik. Artikel und Reden, 1925 bis 1933*, Berlin, 1973, p. 214; see also A. S. Blank, *The Communist Party of Germany in the Struggle against Fascist Dictatorship, 1933-1945*, Moscow, 1964, p. 59 (in Russian).

³ Otto Winzer, *Zwölf Jahre Kampf gegen Faschismus und Krieg*, Berlin, 1955, pp. 26, 27.

cost the party many victims. On 3 March 1933 Thälmann was arrested and then in November Schehr fell into the clutches of the Gestapo, throwing into the faces of his tormentors before he was shot on 1 February 1934, "I was and remain a foe of fascism."¹

It was exceedingly difficult to regroup the forces of the German labour movement to organise resistance to fascism. Apart from the unprecedented barbarous terror to which the working class was subjected there were also other reasons hampering the anti-fascist struggle. Considerable sections of the German people were blinded, led astray by chauvinistic and revanchist propaganda and Nazi social demagoguery; thereby through this alone they were cast into the camp of opponents of vigorous struggle against the New Order and stood idly by while events gained momentum around them. Some of the working class nurtured the illusion that Hitler would not last long in power. The rightwing SPD leaders supported such illusions, instilling in people the idea that the fascist regime would evolve into a moderate conservatism. Even after they had been forced to go into hiding or emigrate, they continued stubbornly to reject any proposals from the KPD Central Committee to join together in struggle, parading their anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. In the circumstances of war hysteria and Hitler's illusory successes, Walter Ulbricht wrote, "only part of the German people, with Communists at their head, retained their anti-fascist and democratic stand and their sober view of political reality".²

Through analysis of the new balance of power, conditions and forms of class struggle in the country, the KPD leadership formulated a new political line. German Communists also took an active part in elaboration by the Seventh Comintern Congress of issues concerning a united workers' front and a Popular Front of struggle against fascism and war.

In October 1935 the first KPD conference since fascism had taken over took place (for conspiratorial purposes it was called the Brussels Conference).

Decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress lay behind the work of the Conference, and it focused on the issue formulated by the KPD Central Committee as "New Way to Joint Struggle to Overthrow the Hitler Dictatorship."³ In his report, Wilhelm Pieck analysed the weak and strong points of KPD activity and dealt specifically with the question of the essence and practical content of the united front

¹ *Der lautlose Aufstand. Bericht über die Widerstandsbewegung des deutschen Volkes 1933-1945*, ed. by Günther Weisenborn, Hamburg, 1953, p. 178.

² Walter Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1955, p. 8.

³ Wilhelm Pieck, *Der neue Weg zum gemeinsamen Kampfe für den Sturz der Hitlerdiktatur. Referat und Schlusswort auf der Brüsseler Parteikonferenz der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands, Oktober 1935*, Berlin, 1947.

policy under the fascist dictatorship. The Conference advanced the slogan of consolidating all Germany's anti-fascist forces on a common Popular Front platform, envisaging the prime objective to be the struggle to set up a new free democratic Germany as a major condition of the transition to socialism.¹

The militant political programme of establishing an anti-fascist Popular Front on a platform acceptable to all Germany's democratic forces underpinned KPD activity oriented to healing the split in the working class and attracting to anti-fascist struggle the widest strata of the German people. In implementing the decisions of the Brussels Conference, the KPD made strenuous efforts to establish relations of cooperation with the SPD. At the end of 1935, on communist initiative, a Committee for Preparing a German Popular Front headed by the writer Heinrich Mann came into being. Communists, Social Democrats and eminent cultural figures took part in its work. The document appealing for joint struggle against fascism under a popular front banner contained the names of such prominent Social Democrats as Rudolf Breitscheid, Alfred Braunthal and Albert Grzesinski, the writers Lion Feuchtwanger, Arnold Zweig and Heinrich Mann, as well as those of Wilhelm Pieck, Wilhelm Florin and Walter Ulbricht. The Committee launched an extensive propaganda campaign in favour of the idea of concerted action against the common enemy of the German people—fascism.²

The heroic resistance by Spanish people to the Franco putschists and the German-Italian interventionists evinced fervent sympathy and solidarity throughout the world, including among German anti-Nazi fighters. On 7 August 1936 the KPD Central Committee called upon all German anti-fascists with any military training to support the liberation struggle of the Spanish Republic. Almost 6,000 left emigration and Germany itself to join the International Brigades, and some 3,000 of them died on Spanish soil.

Steadily contacts among anti-fascists developed in Germany too. Despite the incredible difficulties pockets of resistance appeared in the country in contact with German anti-fascists abroad. In certain large industrial centres, like Berlin, Mannheim and Dortmund, agreement was eventually reached on joint struggle between Communists and Social Democrats both operating deep underground. Communists established contact also with Catholics in opposition to Hitler. The Red Chapel (Rote Kapelle)—Schulze-Boysen—Harnack group—appeared between 1938 and 1939; it was a large and socially broad organisation.³ Roughly from the same time the John Sieg,

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, p. 119.

² See L. I. Gintsberg and Y. S. Drabkin, *German Anti-Fascists in the Fight Against the Hitler Dictatorship (1931-1945)*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 44-46 (in Russian).

³ K. H. Biernat, L. Krauschaar, *Die Schulze-Boysen/Harnack Organisation im antifaschistischen Kampf*, Berlin, 1970; K. Mammach, *Die deutsche antifa-*

Herbert Grasse and Otto Grabowski group was functioning in the Neuköln (district of Berlin-Brandenburg) underground and maintaining contacts with the KPD Central Committee. From the mid-1930s Berlin had a young anti-fascist group led by the Communist Hans Coppi, involving Communists, Social Democrats and Catholics, and the Wolfgang Tiess underground youth organisation which published illegal literature. And in the south-west of the country Erich Honecker was directing underground youth anti-fascist organisations.¹ The KPD was already adept at underground work methods and able to ensure the publication of several newspapers both nationally and locally.

Despite the virulent terror and propaganda about a "labour peace", there was no let-up in the German strike movement, in whose organisation and leadership Communists took an active part. Between 1935 and 1939 strikes occurred at the Krupp arms factories in Essen, chemical plants in Berlin, Hamburg shipbuilding works and the Opel AG works.²

The Berne Conference of 30 January to 1 February 1939 was of great importance in drawing up a new policy for the KPD.³ At a time when Hitler was preparing to launch World War II, the party warned the German people of the impending catastrophe and appealed to all true patriots to unite for joint action against the threat of war. The Berne Conference developed the ideas of the Brussels Conference on the political structure and nature of a future Germany; it formulated the thesis of a fight for a democratic republic that it saw as the most acceptable form of state power, corresponding to the bourgeois-democratic stage of revolution after the destruction of the fascist regime and ensuring an approach towards its socialist stage.

The Conference resolution read, "The new democratic Republic, by contrast with the Weimar Republic, will root out fascism completely. With the confiscation of the property of fascist monopoly capital, fascism will be deprived of its material base. By contrast to the Weimar Republic the new Republic will have an army, police and administrative apparatus that will be reliable safeguards of the

schistische Widerstandsbewegung, 1933-1939, Berlin, 1974; A. S. Blank, *At the Heart of the 'Third Reich'. From the History of the Anti-Fascist Popular Front in the Underground*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian); H. Scheel, "Zur Geschichte der antifaschistischen Widerstandsorganisation Schulze-Boysen/Harnack", *Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 1973, Moscow, 1974, pp. 301-308. "From the History of the Schulze Boysen/Harnack Anti-Fascist Organisation", *Yearbook of German History*, 1973, Moscow, 1974, pp. 301-308 (in Russian).

¹ Erich Honecker, *Aus meinem Leben*, Berlin, 1980.

² See G. N. Goroshkova, "From the History of the Strike Movement in Fascist Germany (1935-1936)" *The German Labour Movement in Recent Times*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 158-201 (in Russian); *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, pp. 139-40.

³ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, pp. 216-24.

people's democratic freedoms and democratic rights. Again by contrast with the Weimar Republic, in the new democratic Republic the country's destiny will be in the hands not of the big bourgeoisie which, under the guise of coalition with a workers' party, could attack the people's economic and political rights, but of the working class that would heal its breach and unite in a popular front with the poor farmers, petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals."¹

The KPD did everything it could to acquaint the German public with the Berne Conference decisions and to reinforce the underground anti-fascist front. Prominent party figures travelled illegally about the country and were able substantially to invigorate illegal work in Berlin, Dusseldorf, Stuttgart, Munich and other big cities.² Strikes and acts of sabotage became more frequent, in particular in the Saar and Rhine-Westphalia industrial basin as well as in Berlin, Hamburg and Upper Silesia. Nonetheless, debilitated by the bloody terror, German anti-fascists were unable to stop Hitler launching World War II. The KPD had by that time lost most of its tried and tested cadres. Through their virulent nationalistic and anti-communist propaganda the fascists had succeeded in infecting a considerable part of the population with chauvinism. The difficulties which all genuine German anti-fascists were experiencing in their work in mobilising people for the struggle now multiplied in the wake of the post-Munich sell-out international atmosphere that was favourable to the Hitler regime. The connivance at fascist aggression by the Munich men of Britain, France and the USA led to such strengthening of the murderous regime of fascist dictatorship in Germany that it was practically impossible to bridle and defeat it by the internal efforts of German anti-fascists. That historical task could be dealt with now only through the consolidation of world democratic and peace-loving forces around the Soviet Union—the bastion of international security, progress and socialism.

THE 1934 ANTI-FASCIST UPRISING IN AUSTRIA

The lessons of the struggle during the 1929-1933 crisis, its successes and failures, were not lost on the international labour movement. While the threat of fascism had only recently been regarded by the broad mass of working people as an abstract problem or as a grave yet shortlived disease, everything certainly looked different once

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

² H. Laschitzka, S. Vietzke, *Deutschland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1933-1945*, Berlin, 1964; K. Mammach, "Zum antifaschistischen Kampf der KPD", *Faschismusforschung. Positionen. Probleme. Polemik*, Cologne, 1980, pp. 323-54.

Hitler had come to power. The paramount conclusion that stemmed from a very general analysis of the causes of fascism's success was that its further spreading could only be halted by the combined efforts of all detachments of the labour movement and other democratic forces relying on extra-parliamentary resolute action and all available fighting methods, not excluding armed struggle. The Austrian workers were among the first to put up an open struggle to fascism, showing that there was a force—the working class—within each country capable of safeguarding the gains of democracy by armed struggle.

The 1929-1933 economic crisis had had a catastrophic impact on the Austrian economy. In May 1932 the last of the country's five blast furnaces that had been operating in 1929 was closed down. By the end of the year all steel foundries had been shut down.¹ Unemployment reached enormous dimensions: 600,000 out of a population of 6 million.²

The exceedingly unstable alignment of political forces in the country and fear of the labour movement provoked the ruling class to seek a way out through authoritarian dictatorship and foreign assistance—from Italian and German fascism. As the years passed terror increased from the militarised detachments of Austrian fascists—the *Heimwehr*. The ruling Christian Social Party headed by Chancellor Dollfuss launched repression against workers' parties and organisations, managing to isolate and disperse them.

From early March 1933, emboldened by the success of the National Socialists in Germany, Austrian reaction went on to the offensive. The Dollfuss government outlawed public demonstrations and protest meetings, introduced preliminary newspaper censorship, dissolved parliament and the republican *Schutzbund*, and outlawed the Communist Party of Austria.

On 11 September Dollfuss announced the creation of a "Social Christian German State on Corporative Lines".³ Its political prop was to be the so-called patriotic front involving the Christian Social Party, the Catholic organisations and the *Heimwehr*. In January 1934 the government passed a resolution on the appointment to all regions of commissars with dictatorial powers. The *Heimwehr* began to seize power in the localities. Together, the police, the fascists carried out pogroms on the premises of workers' organisations. And leaders of the *Schutzbund* were taken into custody.

¹ See V. M. Turok, "Political Crisis in Austria in 1932-1933 and the Fight by the Working Class Against Reaction", *From the History of the Working-Class and Revolutionary Movement*, Moscow, 1958, p. 734 (in Russian).

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 43, 29 September 1932, Vol. 12, p. 920.

³ *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 12 September 1933.

Attacks by bourgeois reaction did not meet any proper resistance from the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SAPO). As Otto Bauer admitted, the SAPO tried to take the middle road between revolutionary politics and the SPD policy. But political development left no room for such a road. The SAPO leaders wished to confine themselves to purely parliamentary activity, even though the bourgeoisie and its strike force—the fascist groups—were showing them scant respect. Most of the Austrian working class were following in the wake of the Social Democrats believing that their leaders would, at the decisive moment, head the fight for democracy and socialism. They were mistaken.

Although, as Arnold Reisberg has written, the SAPO leadership "recognised the revolutionary class struggle as a matter of principle, in every specific circumstance they rejected it as unsafe and bound to cause victims".¹ As long as elections and parliamentary activity were in the forefront of the political battle, this contradiction in the SAPO's ideological and political stance was not too obvious. But it became clear in the early 1930s, when the bourgeois turn to anti-parliamentary activity presented the SAPO leaders with the need to rely mainly on an extra-parliamentary mass struggle.

The Communist Party of Austria was the only political party advocating the organisation of an immediate rebuff to reaction's onslaught. Under communist guidance anti-fascist committees came into being and anti-fascist congresses were held. Communists frequently appealed to the Social Democrats and their organisations to join in united action against fascism. At the Vienna KPO Conference on 8 August 1932, Johann Koplenig declared: "From now on the most important thing is the fight against fascism. We are making no conditions save one—to continue the struggle."² Communists opposed all manifestations of feelings for an *Anschluss*, held by Social Democrats as well (which in the eyes of many ordinary working people made them no different from the National Socialists). Communists counterposed their policy of preparing for a decisive battle with fascism to the inconsistent "laying down arms" policy pursued by the SAPO leadership.³

The social democratic leaders maintained that events would not catch them unawares, that the party HQ was on the alert and carefully following the enemy's machinations. The SAPO Congress (October 1933) ratified the resolution by which social democracy

¹ Arnold Reisberg, *Februar 1934, Hintergründe und Folgen*, Vienna, 1974.

² Quoted from J. Schiller, "The Communist Party of Austria and 12 February 1934", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 2, 1964, p. 100.

³ Reisberg, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

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was to pledge to call workers out on general strike in the event of any of the following circumstances occurring: 1. the revoking of the rights of Vienna's municipality and introducing the post of government commissar for Vienna; 2. dissolving the free trade unions;¹ 3. dissolving the Social Democratic Party and 4. the proclaiming of a fascist constitution.¹ It all sounded radical on the outside. In actual fact these conditions for "arranging" revolution disarmed the workers, dooming them to inactivity when confronted with mounting reaction which was flexible and adaptable enough to capitalise on the wait-and-see and supine tactics of social democracy.

Events demonstrated that the stance taken by the Communist Party was the only valid one. When in early February 1934 the government removed the Social Democrat Karl Seitz from the post of Governor of Vienna, arrested *Schutzbund* commanders and, essentially, revoked the constitution, the Communist Party called on the people to start a general strike. The SAPO leaders flew in the face of their own tactical guidelines and would not agree with the call.

In many towns, especially in Vienna, the ordinary people and local SAPO organisations were ready for vigorous counteractions and organised armed resistance to fascism. The explosion carried over into a series of spontaneous actions initially locally and then in the capital itself. The constant shillyshallying of the SAPO leadership hampered but could not restrain the people as they strained for battle. When the police in Linz attacked a SAPO house, detachments of the local *Schutzbund* came to the rescue without waiting for any directive from the centre. News of the Linz battles stirred up the Viennese workers. Gas workers and employees at the Simmering Power Station and many other workplaces immediately downed tools. The trams stopped running. By a majority of one the SAPO board adopted a resolution calling for a general strike, but it was not even passed on to the workers and practically nothing was done to implement it. As always the SAPO leaders were more concerned with getting talks going with the government.

By the evening of 12 February fighting had spread even to the Austrian capital. Whole districts of Vienna were briefly in the hands of the insurgents. *Schutzbund* members and Communists were the backbone of the fighting detachments of the insurgent proletariat. Rank-and-file members of both workers' parties fought side by side at the barricades of Vienna, and a number of towns in Upper Austria,

¹ V. M. Turok, *Essays on Austrian History, 1924-1938*, Moscow, 1962, p. 216 (in Russian); A. Reisberg, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

Styria and Lower Austria. The Viennese workers put up a courageous battle up to 15 February. But the odds were uneven. The expected general strike did not materialise, and it was not long before government troops suppressed the last pockets of resistance.¹

As many as 1,200 workers fell in battle, some 5,000 were wounded and more than 10,000 arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. By military tribunal sentence, nine *Schutzbund* commanders were shot, including Georg Weissel, Emil Svoboda, Koloman Wallisch, Karl Münichreiter and Josef Stanek. Many of those who took part in the uprising were executed, and all workers' organisations were banned.

The communist efforts were not enough to overcome the spirit of passive defencism and vacillation of the social democratic leaders. The workers' actions did not have a guiding centre, their separate pockets conducted the battle in an uncoordinated way, in most cases they had neither a clear-cut plan of interaction nor a precise political programme. A large part of the *Schutzbund* members did not even join the insurrectionists. In practice the SAPO leadership had abandoned the insurrectionists at the height of the battle. Georgi Dimitrov who was languishing in a Berlin gaol during the February uprising wrote the following to the *Schutzbund*, "No, the armed struggle of the Austrian working class was not a mistake. The mistake consisted in the fact that this struggle was not organised and was not waged in a revolutionary, a Bolshevik fashion... The armed fight of the Austrian proletariat was not transformed into an actual armed uprising. Herein lies its main error."²

The Austrian events of February 1934 left a profound mark on the history of the international labour movement. It was the first large-scale armed action by the European proletariat against fascism, and it demonstrated the working class's readiness to put up a resistance and, at the same time, displayed the bankruptcy of the wait-and-see, tailist tactics.

The Communist Party of Austria remained the only political party in the country that held high the banner of anti-fascist struggle. After February 1934, in difficult underground conditions, the best sons and daughters of the Austrian labour movement made every effort to implement the idea of a united workers' front on a permanent basis. A left opposition group of Revolutionary Socialists formed within the SAPO and held out a hand to Communists. In the autumn of 1934 that section of the SAPO announced that the working class

¹ See F. Furnberg, "Lessons of the Austrian Working-Class Courageous Struggle", *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1974, p. 88; J. Schiller, op. cit., pp. 99-104.

² Georgi Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 405.

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should win power by revolutionary means and use the same means to safeguard it in the battle against counter-revolution.¹ Together with Communists, the Revolutionary Socialists set up an underground *Schutzbund*. And with the backing of illegal free trade unions they waged war on Austrian fascism, fighting to restore democratic freedoms and to avert the new danger of Hitler Germany seizing Austria. It was all insufficient, however, to restore fully the forces of the labour movement and successfully to withstand the menace of *Anschluss*. What is more, the communist consistent policy of consolidating and mobilising the people came up against resistance from part of the influential right-wing social democratic leaders (Karl Renner et alia), of the Church circles and the bourgeois press.

Taking advantage of terror-induced paralysis of the labour movement as well as the bourgeois treachery and social democratic vacillation, Hitler Germany put into operation the forced annexation of Austria stage by stage. German troops entered Austria on 11 March 1938, and two days later Austria ceased to exist as an independent state.

THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE

The pre-history of the February 1934 battles in Austria has much apparent similarity with events in France. In both countries the maturation of fascist plans against democratic institutions and the mobilisation of the Resistance forces occurred almost simultaneously. Even the moment for the decisive battle with the labour and democratic movement was appointed by the reactionaries and fascist groupings in France as early as February 1934, just like Dollfuss in Austria.

All the same, behind the apparent similarity lay considerable differences in the balance of class and political forces in France, on the one hand, and in Austria and Germany, on the other. The economic crisis did not have such catastrophic consequences in France as it did in Germany and Austria. The overall industrial production index in France fell from 108.4 points in 1930 to 79.5 points in 1935 (1928 = 100). Yet alongside industries where the fall in production was 50-60 per cent of the pre-crisis level (building, steel and aluminium production) there were also relatively affluent areas (such as the coal industry in which extraction only dipped 15 per cent). The total of unemployed by 1933 amounted to in excess of a million, and had climbed to 2 million by 1935.²

So we see that the very economic situation did not yet create among the French big bourgeoisie the feeling that it had got itself into an

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 6, 9 February 1935, Vol. 15, p. 159.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 4, 26 January 1933, Vol. 13, pp. 111-12; *The History of France*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, p. 139 (in Russian).

utterly blind alley. Furthermore, the French bourgeoisie had incomparably better than the ruling oligarchy in Germany adjusted the mechanism of parliamentary democracy to protect its class interests and was therefore in no hurry to reject it. And another thing. Although Hitler's coming to power encouraged French fascism, the Nazi revanchist programme scared the French bourgeois who saw Germany as France's eternal foe.

While class considerations made influential groups of the French monopoly bourgeoisie support fascist trends, the national sentiments of the middle bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois strata undoubtedly made it hard to expand the mass base of fascism. The traditional parties, especially the radical and radical socialist parties, kept those strata under their influence.¹ Moreover, the French labour movement had historically always had much more influence on the petty bourgeoisie and all the middle strata than was the case, for example, in Germany. All that explains why in France fascism did not manage to establish a substantial mass base. It is hardly surprising that the very fact of realising the danger of right-wing forces should engender a strong anti-fascist movement.² Of considerable import was learning from the lessons of German and Austrian experience. The participation of members of the nation's healthy forces in the anti-fascist and anti-war Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement, established in 1932, also helped to enhance the traditions of joint action between the working class and other democratic strata.³

The French Communist Party (PCF) played an outstanding role in organising that movement. In the summer of 1932 the party backed the call by Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse for an anti-war congress of workers, cultural, social and trade union organisations. At the Congress itself, which opened in Amsterdam in August 1932, the French delegation, consisting mainly of members of the French Communist Party and the CGTU members, put forward a concrete programme for combating the war danger which the Congress adopted.

By the start of 1933 the French Communist Party had purged itself of sectarian groups and was ably tying in the struggle for general democratic demands with that for socialism; it was able to draw into this mass patriotic movement many of the grass-roots branches of the SFIO (Section Française de L'Internationale Ouvrière).

¹ See *The History of Fascism in Western Europe*, p. 353.

² Jacques Chambaz, *Le front populaire pour le Pain, la Liberté et la Paix*, Paris, 1961, pp. 26-27.

³ *Histoire de Parti communiste français (manuel)*, Paris, 1964, pp. 251-52; S. S. Salychov, *The French Socialist Party Between the Two World Wars, 1921-1940*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 240, 241; S. A. Pokrovskaya, "From the History of the Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement in France (1932-1933)", *The French Annual for 1968*, Moscow, 1970 (both in Russian).

In several localities contacts between Communists and Socialists were cemented by formal agreements in spite of the disfavour of the SFIO leadership. By October 1932 France had 213 local anti-war committees in which Communists, Socialists and non-party people worked.¹

An anti-fascist congress took place in the Pleyel Hall in Paris on 4 June 1933. It was attended by a large number of Socialists who had responded to the appeal of the congress organisers in spite of the hostile position taken by the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International.² The success of the congress confirmed the correctness of the communist policy in bringing together all anti-war and anti-fascist forces. In France itself contacts grew strong between Communists and other left groups within the framework of the united Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement that had formed by that time. By February 1934 the country already had 650 local committees of the Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement.³ They had made a breach in the wall of misunderstanding and hostility that separated Socialists and Communists.

The French Communist Party Central Committee announced its readiness in August 1931 to agree to mutual withdrawal of socialist or communist candidates in the second round of voting on the basis of a common programme.⁴ The call found a response among the party rank-and-file and the middle levels of the SFIO leadership. A substantial number of activists who inclined to the left (people like Jean Ziromski) more and more insistently began to demand a return to revolutionary ideals and the healing of the split in the French labour movement. The bankruptcy of the social democratic policy of class collaboration in Germany and understanding of that bitter truth led to an even stronger impact of left views within the SFIO. In November 1933 the right-wing faction of "neo-socialists" were excluded from the SFIO; for many years they had resisted any rapprochement with the Communists. This therefore removed a serious obstacle to unity of workers and left forces.⁵

When around the end of 1933 numerous fascist groups and the right-wing bourgeois press, capitalising on the scandalous exposure of corruption in government circles (the Stavisky scandal), stepped up anti-parliamentary propaganda and appealed for the establish-

¹ See S. A. Pokrovskaya, *The Movement Against War and Fascism in France, 1932-1939*, Moscow, 1980, p. 32 (in Russian).

² Jacques Duclos, *Mémoires*, Vol. 1, 1896-1934, "Le chemin que j'ai choisi. De Verdun au Parti communiste", Paris, 1968, p. 391.

³ *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, p. 226.

⁴ Georges Cogniot, Victor Joannès, *Maurice Thorez, l'homme, le militant*, Paris, 1970, p. 100.

⁵ Claude Willard, Jacques Chambaz, Jean Bruhat, Georges Cogniot, Claude Gindin, *Le Front Populaire (La France de 1934 à 1939)*, Paris, 1972, p. 27.

ment of a "strong authority", the French proletariat responded with heightened readiness to repulse reaction's attack. Keenly following the events, Communists appealed to the people to be ready at any moment to rise to the defence of the republic.

In the first few days of February 1934, the leaders of numerous fascist leagues and, first and foremost, Croix du Feu, the shock force of the fascist movement in France, really believed their hour had come. The putsch was fixed for 6 February. That day, in the evening, many thousand-strong armed columns of fascists advanced on the Bourbon Palace where debates were underway in the Chamber of Deputies on ratifying the powers of the new Daladier government. In an attempt fully to disrupt parliament's work and paralyse the executive power, the right-wingers resorted to obstruction. With every hour the situation in the capital became more and more menacing. In the meantime groups of fascists had begun to storm the Bourbon Palace with the intention of taking it over and dictating terms for a New Order on France.¹ As a result of a clash between fascists and the police and Republican Guard, a number of people were killed and more than two thousand were wounded. It was midnight before the central squares of Paris were cleared of the would-be insurrectionists.

Reactionary plans had been blocked. But the fascist onslaught had frightened parliament. In the morning of 7 February the Daladier government resigned, even though it had obtained the backing of a parliamentary majority the day before. Gaston Doumergue, placeman of reaction, formed a new administration.

Having received news of the initial fascist sorties the PCF Central Committee Secretariat appealed to all party members, declaring that "the place of every Communist is in the thick of the battle, at the head of the fighting people". A United General Confederation of Labour leaflet recommended its members "straightaway to organise groups of anti-fascist defence and to be ready for immediate action".² In many parts of Paris thousands of workers responded to the communist appeal and took part in fighting against the bands of fascists. In the Chamber of Deputies the passionate speech by Maurice Thorez echoed the huge force of inner conviction in the people's resolution to foil the fascist plans: "Give the workers of Paris the chance to act; they will swiftly put an end to the fascist bands".³

¹ See Y. V. Yegorov, "On the Question of the Purposes of the Fascist Putsch in February 1934 in France (A Critical Analysis of Certain Notions of Bourgeois Historiography)", *Academic Notes of the Herzen Leningrad Pedagogical Institute*, Vol. 307, Leningrad, 1969, pp. 33-49 (in Russian).

² *L'Humanité*, 6 February 1934.

³ *Annales de la Chambre des Députés. Débats parlementaires. Session ordinaire de 1934*, Vol. 1, pp. 411, 412.

The PCF General Secretary was addressing his call "to all fraternal socialist workers". In the course of the debate motivating the socialist faction decision to vote for the radical Daladier's government, the SFIO leader Léon Blum declared that his party intended to do all it could to "block the way to the ferocious attack of fascist reaction both on a parliamentary level and on other levels".¹

An overall appreciation of the scale of the impending threat was an important condition for a fresh step in the direction of bringing together communist and socialist parties although, as events showed, the notion held by SFIO leaders on permissible direct popular actions in the anti-fascist struggle sharply differed from that held by Communists. The right-wingers and centrists in the SFIO leadership took up an indecisive vacillating position. As before they preferred the parliamentary rough and tumble. That particularly explains them going back on their own decision on holding an anti-fascist demonstration on 9 February, since it had been banned by the government, and its postponement to 12 February. On the other hand, the Communist Party proceeded from its well-known Marxist-Leninist premise that "the revolutionary proletariat is incomparably stronger in the *extra-parliamentary* than in the parliamentary struggle, as far as influencing the masses and drawing them into the struggle is concerned".² So the issue of the time limits of joint anti-fascist action acquired fundamental political significance.³

Realising how important it was not to lose the initiative, the Communist Party, in contrast to the SFIO that had shirked its duty, did not rearrange the date (9 February) it had fixed for the anti-fascist demonstration that had been outlawed by the Doumergue government. Some 60,000 people, Communists and Socialists, took part in that first major action by Paris workers. In bloody clashes with the police six workers lost their lives and more than a thousand were wounded. But the sacrifices were not in vain. The 9 February demonstration inspired the whole of French labour and moved the SFIO leaders to abandon their dilatory stance. The earlier-adopted decision to hold a general protest strike on 12 February could no longer be changed by anyone. The blood spilled on the streets of Paris on 9 February demanded vigilance, resolution and unity in battle against the impending danger of fascism and for defence of the republic.

The day 12 February 1934 was to become an important landmark in the annals of French social and political history. On that day 4.5 million working people—more than half the country's workforce—

¹ *L'Oeuvre de Léon Blum. 1934-1937*, Paris, 1964, p. 9.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Russian Revolution and Civil War", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1964, p. 33.

³ See S. S. Salychev, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

took part in a general strike and came out onto the streets to say no to fascism. Over 150,000 people participated in the protest demonstrations and grand general assembly of Communists and Socialists in Paris. Among the communist speakers were Marcel Cachin and Jacques Duclos; among the socialist orators were Blum and Vincent Auriol. Mass demonstrations took place in most other towns of France. Many resolutions of the anti-fascist meetings expressed the people's readiness to safeguard democratic freedoms at all cost and "by all means without exception".¹ A typical feature of the 12 February anti-fascist action was that it combined those social strata and categories of workers on whose passivity reaction had reckoned. Members of the petty bourgeoisie (farmers, small traders and artisans) actively participated in the strikes, protest meetings and demonstrations.²

The historic significance of the February workers' demonstrations was enormous. Fascism's onslaught had been beaten off and its plan to consolidate the forces of internal reaction foiled. So, too, were the plans of international imperialist groups to turn France into a camp of the fascist powers and make it a bastion in the fight against the USSR and Bolshevism. During the mass action the unity of the workers had grown and many partitions separating democrats and anti-fascists of different political persuasions were torn down. The February events served as a starting point in the fortunes of the Popular Front, and the example of the French proletariat gave a fresh impulse to the international labour movement.

The French Communist Party set a firm course to establish concerted action with the rank-and-file and the top echelons of all anti-fascist, democratic parties and groups, especially the SFIO. The situation was certainly favourable. Everywhere there sprang up anti-fascist and vigilance committees in which members of the most diverse classes and professions worked alongside Communists and Socialists, Catholics and Protestants. Unity of proletarian forces emanated from all the circumstances of the political moment and the nation's interests.

A National Conference of the French Communist Party took place in the Paris suburbs of Ivry between 23 and 26 June 1934; it was to play a crucial part in the labour movement and political life of the country generally. While roundly criticising sectarian mistakes,³ the party branded fascism the chief danger and called for the setting up of a united workers' front from the bottom to the top, renouncing any interpretation of that formula in the spirit of those who preferred to see in it merely a tactical ploy calculated to expose opportunist.

¹ *Lv Dépêche*, Paris-Toulouse, 14 February 1934.

² See Y. Kravchenko, *The Popular Front in France*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 44, 45.

³ *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, p. 268.

leaders. The Conference decisions were all permeated with the idea of establishing a broad anti-fascist bloc uniting the farmers and middle strata around the proletariat.

Frankly proclaiming its ultimate goals,¹ the party set out a programme of anti-fascist struggle that was of a general democratic nature and with which the petty bourgeoisie and middle strata could associate themselves. The party made the point that in the circumstances it saw no possibility of advancing slogans and demands that went further than those that a substantial majority of French people were at that moment ready to accept as their own—i.e., the workers of Paris and Lyons, the farmers of the Somme Valley, the dockers of Marseilles, the small traders and craftsmen of Perpignan, Catholics and atheists, the war veterans taken in by fascist demagoguery, the widely-mixed groups of pacifists, the intellectuals and youth.

Did that mean that the party, as its leftist critics asserted, had chosen a defensive tactic that precluded any movement forward? Decidedly not. In expatiating on its position, the PCF said that in the absence of a direct revolutionary situation it was advocating measures of a transitional nature which, by uniting people, were intended to “still further shake the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie and multiply the powers of the working class”.² Only socialism was capable of giving the people real well-being, peace and freedom, and the road to it lay through the establishment of democracy even though it might not be proletarian, yet already serving the working people’s interests, restricting the power of capital, countering fascism and relying “strongly on popular extra-parliamentary action”.³ That was the nub of the new programme of anti-fascist action that the Ivry Conference was voting for.

In the whole gamut of objectives that French Communists were intending to resolve, the most important was healing the rift and overcoming hostility between the two leading working-class organisations—the PCF and the SFIO, and between the two major trade union federations—the CGT and the CGTU. From 1923 the Communist Party had made 28 proposals to the Socialists to hold talks for setting up a united workers’ front. But every time the SFIO leadership had turned them down. In the new situation after February 1934, however, the SFIO leaders could no longer avoid a dialogue with Communists. The rapprochement of rank-and-file organisations of both parties had gone too far during the anti-fascist action. Pacts on concerted action were signed in the capital’s *département*—the Seine, in Marseilles, Lyons and elsewhere. What would have been

¹ *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 3, Vol. 13, Paris, 1954, p. 171.

² *The Communist International*, Nos. 19-20, 5 October 1935, Vol. XII, p. 1414.

³ *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 2, Vol. 9, Paris, 1952, p. 42.

the fate of the socialist leaders and the party in general had they continued their blocking tactics against working-class unity around the anti-fascist struggle? Events themselves provided an unequivocal answer. Blum wrote in early July 1934: "The desire to come to agreement was deafening. Would it have been possible in the circumstances to have responded to it [the French Communist Party.—*Ed.*] in the negative? Would it have been possible to ignore the spontaneous aspiration for unity coming from the common people? As far as I am concerned, I think such a stance is impossible."¹ Most members of the SFIO National Council agreed with Blum's reasoning. On 11 July 1934 official talks commenced between representatives of the two parties.

The Communist and Socialist parties signed the Pact of United Action between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party on 27 July 1934, envisaging joint action by the parties to combat the danger of fascism and war.

The Pact paved the way for a merging of trade union federations. After exceedingly protracted negotiations and procrastination by the CGT leaders, congresses of the two federations in September 1936 adopted the decision to merge. The unification congress took place in Toulouse in March 1936. In spite of all the flaws inscribed into the compromise charter of the united trade union movement, the accent was on the class nature of the united CGT. The Toulouse Congress was also in favour of backing an association of anti-fascist forces. After uniting the union movement, working-class organisation strenuously improved. Whilst some 900,000 workers were in both federations at the time of the merger, a year later the united CGT already had 5 million members.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of healing the breach in the French labour movement. For the first time in many years of conflict and estrangement, Communists and Socialists had been able, on the basis of fighting against the common enemy—fascism—to concur on concerted action in defence of the nation's democracy, honour and dignity, as well as the workers' vital economic interests. By this act alone it immeasurably enhanced the part played by the French working class in the country's political life and served as a mobilising example for workers in other capitalist countries. Finally, the formation of a united workers' front meant the creation of a paramount condition for the working class to join forces with the middle strata of the population.

Communists did everything possible to promote the success and draw into the struggle those proletarians of town and country who had stood aside from the anti-fascist struggle. In October 1934 the

¹ *Le Populaire*, 8 July 1934.

PCF proposed attracting fresh forces to the United Action Pact and the formation of "a People's Front for liberty, work and peace".¹ Communists favoured the immediate commencement of a network of rank-and-file Popular Front committees, widely involving in them democrats without distinction of party adherence and with simultaneous establishment of contacts with the leadership of the largest political organisations of petty-bourgeois strata. That meant primarily the parties of the Radicals and Radical Socialists who had the backing of most of the petty bourgeoisie in town and country. Consistently and patiently, Communists worked to achieve an increasingly full and variegated unity of effort under the aegis of "broad popular unity" from all sincere fighters against fascism and war.

This only credible policy soon bore fruit. In November 1934 Doumergue was forced to resign. There followed the ringing success of left parties in municipal elections in the spring of 1935 and the fall of two right-of-centre cabinets (Flandin and Bouisson). The leftward shift obliged the French government to sign a Franco-Soviet Mutual Aid Treaty on 2 May 1935, to the delight of all progressive France. Extra-parliamentary actions by working people under anti-fascist and anti-war slogans, during which the militant cooperation of Communists, Socialists and Radicals grew even more, were remarkable for their scale and organisation. It was now common for red flags to fly alongside the tricolour during mass demonstrations. A democratic alliance took shape in parliament between the PCF, the SFIO, a "proletarian unity" group, a republican-socialist alliance, Radicals and "independent left".

The Anti-Fascist Popular Front finally formed in the course of impressive mass demonstrations in defence of the Republic on 14 July 1935 organised on the initiative of the French Communist Party and the Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement. In Paris alone about half a million people took part in the demonstrations. At a meeting at the Buffalo Cycle Course, members of anti-fascist organisations arriving from all over the country took the Popular Front solemn oath. The protest march was headed by leaders of the main Popular Front parties—Maurice Thorez from the Communists, Léon Blum from the Socialists and Edouard Daladier from the Radicals.

The principal success of 14 July 1935 was that the Communist Party had met its target—combining in people's minds the idea of political democracy and patriotic feeling, on the one hand, and social justice and internationalism, on the other.² The labour movement gained the backing of the general democratic movement, and that joining of forces had an immediate impact, with the working class

¹ Maurice Thorez, *France Today and the People's Front*, London, 1936, p. 175.

² See Y. I. Rubinsky, *France's Uneasy Years*, p. 306.

preserving its leading role. Reaction was forced to retreat. Fascism had not passed in France.

The Popular Front bore the imprint of France's national conditions and historical traditions; nevertheless, by its experience the French proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard—the Communist Party—made a valuable contribution to the way the international communist movement tackled the problem of strategy and tactics in anti-fascist struggle. In his report to the Seventh Comintern Congress in August 1935 Georgi Dimitrov said: "France, as we know, is a country in which the working class is setting an example to the whole international proletariat of how to fight fascism. The French Communist Party is setting an example to all the sections of the Communist International of how the tactics of the united front should be applied; the Socialist workers are setting an example of what the Social Democratic workers of other capitalist countries should now be doing in the fight against fascism."¹

The Popular Front Programme drawn up jointly by the PCF, the SFIO and the Radical Party was published on 12 January 1936. It went further than the United Action Pact between Communists and Socialists in its objectives. It envisaged the nationalisation of the big banks; reform of the taxation system with the main tax burden being transferred to big capitalists; the revoking of decrees inhibiting freedom of the press; the declaration of a political amnesty; the disarmament and dispersal of fascist organisations; and the improvement of the status of the colonial peoples. It also included a whole range of measures intended to improve working conditions, the social security system and the position of smallholders and the unions. Its overriding measure was the demand to nationalise the war industry. In the field of foreign policy, it paid major attention to strengthening France's security and safeguarding it from the growing threat of fascist Germany; in that connection it pointed to the need to do everything possible to fortify Soviet-French relations and expressed support for the idea of collective security.

At its Eighth Congress in January 1936 at Villeurbanne, the French Communist Party made a new step towards creatively applying Lenin's tactics of broad class alliances. It solemnly declared its intention of pursuing an "extended hand" policy to all healthy elements in the nation for whom the nation's honour and dignity were uppermost, who cared for all that constituted France's greatness, above all its age-old traditions of fighting for independence and freedom.²

Of considerable importance was the setting up of a Popular Front National Committee, as well as Popular Front departmental and

¹ G. Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

² *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 3, Vol. 13, p. 175.

local committees, which laid an organisational basis for launching the mass anti-fascist movement. In referring to the nature of the Popular Front, Thorez underlined, "The Popular Front is not a parliamentary coalition. It is the mass movement united in action for bread, liberty and peace, with its legal expression on the parliamentary and governmental level."¹ In so far as the Popular Front helped to organise the mass movement, it confirmed proletarian revolutionary means of anti-fascist struggle, paving the way for political perspectives.² True, Communists did not manage to create an independent non-party mass organisation of working people owing to resistance of socialists and radicals, who insisted that Popular Front bodies be formed on the basis of representation of the parties and not the elective principle as Communists were proposing. The party representation principle was to become the main source of weakness of the Popular Front's organisational structure.

The Popular Front had become a factor that ensured the preponderance of democratic forces over reaction. At the parliamentary elections of April-May 1936 the three major Popular Front parties—the Communists, Socialists and Radicals, that had formed an electoral pact, had an overwhelming victory. Their candidates received over 5.1 million votes while 4.2 million went to the parties of the right.³ The victory was largely due to the substantial triumph of the French Communist Party with its 1.5 million votes—i.e., double what it had received at the previous 1932 polls; the number of communist members of parliament had increased approximately sevenfold. In June 1936 the first Popular Front government headed by Léon Blum was formed, consisting of Socialists and Radicals and relying on the support of the democratic majority in parliament and the Popular Front movement.

The government's formation coincided with an unprecedentedly extensive strike movement: while between 9,000 and 13,000 had been on strike monthly from January to May 1936, some 2 million had downed tools in June.⁴

Strikes involving factory occupation had become the new form of struggle. The strikes arose spontaneously under the impact of such factors as the strikers' desire to combat strike-breakers more effectively, to keep together, to deprive the bosses of the opportunity to use blackmail or bribery of individual groups of workers. But the ideolo-

¹ *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 3, Vol. 14, p. 282.

² Roger Martelli, "The Communists in French Society", *World Marxist Review*, 1981, No. 3, pp. 39-47.

³ See Y. I. Rubinsky, *France's Uneasy Years*, p. 317.

⁴ See Y. V. Yegorov, *The Popular Front in France*, Leningrad, 1972, pp. 123-24 (in Russian).

gical and political impact of such strikes went far beyond their initial objectives.

Although the strikers were putting forward economic demands, the very situation lent them a political character. Moved by a true class sense, French workers were striving through direct action to consolidate the victory of the left in the parliamentary elections. However great was the political effect of the election results, it was the mass workers' actions that became that decisive factor which forced the ruling groups to make substantial concessions to the working class.

On 7 June 1936 the Matignon Agreement was signed between the CGT and the industrialists, providing for substantial wage increases for workers, recognition of trade union rights, etc.¹ Relying on the uncommonly high level of activity of the working class and its election victory, the Popular Front government was able to pass through parliament a large part of the programme for domestic change approved by the Communists, Socialists and Radicals. It included the law on paid holidays (14 days a year), the 40-hour work week and compulsory collective agreements; it improved pensions for the elderly and war invalids; it increased expenditure on public works and improved the unemployment benefit system. Workers' wages rose by between 7 and 15 per cent. A number of laws met the interests of the petty bourgeoisie: one introduced preferential credit for small farmers, traders and artisans, with delayed repayment facilities. The purchasing prices of farm produce were increased. And one of the key demands of the Popular Front Programme became law—reform of the Bank of France. The rights of the "two hundred families" were restricted. Members of the government, economic and public organisations were given seats on the newly-created General Council of the Bank. A law on nationalisation of the largest war industrial concerns was also passed. And on 18 June the government ratified the previously-adopted law on banning fascist organisations.

The Popular Front brought the working class and the whole of the French people gains that they had been unable to attain in the long years since the Paris Commune. And the fascist movement had been dealt a crushing blow. The formation of the Popular Front government and the carrying out of social and democratic reforms took place in a situation of unprecedented political activity by the widest sections of the public, which set definite limits to the bourgeoisie's economic and political power, ensuring and guaranteeing overall democratic progress.²

With the Popular Front movement's success, the Communist Party

¹ *Bulletin du ministère du travail*, 1936, p. 222.

² *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 3, Vol. 14, p. 251.

was faced with a number of new tasks. The party's influence on all facets of social life had grown immeasurably. For the first time the party leadership had to deal too with the question of taking part in a coalition government along with Socialists and Radicals. It had held back from entering the Blum government and confined itself to parliamentary support. This circumspect stance still provides ammunition for speculation by bourgeois and social democratic researchers about the "insincerity" and "lack of loyalty" of Communists towards their allies. In fact it was not long before the PCF did change its mind and, precisely in the time most arduous for the Popular Front, expressed its readiness to share government responsibility; but the Socialists and Radicals turned it down.¹

The Popular Front's taking over of government facilitated the growth in popular political activity and at the same time set the labour movement several complex problems. The successful development of the May-June 1936 general strike had engendered dangerous sentiments among some workers taken in by leftist demagoguery that anything was now possible. Slogans like this would have doomed the working class to isolation from its non-proletarian allies and, consequently, to defeat. Bearing this in mind, PCF leaders appealed to workers to halt strikes after the conclusion of the Matignon Agreement. In opposition to the "all is now possible" slogan, Thorez announced, "One should know how to terminate ... the movement of the masses."²

Contrary to the widespread legend in bourgeois and social democratic literature, the Communists did successfully overcome the leftist popular sentiments and succeed in getting the mass struggle to help shore up the Popular Front government in the face of reaction's virulent resistance.

It was more difficult to overcome reformist underestimation of the importance of mass struggle. The formation of the Popular Front government and its initial successes produced among some working people reformist illusions that now that the government was in power there was no longer a need for mass struggle. These illusions were vigorously supported by both the Radicals and SFIO leaders. Realising that the main source of Popular Front strength lay in support from the broad mass of rank-and-file workers, Socialists and Radicals did not shrink from using the mass movement for winning elections. But they objected to furthering that movement after the formation of Blum's administration, asserting that it would hamper government activity in implementing the Popular Front Programme. There began to echo calls from the ranks of those parties for the dissolution of Popular Front committees.

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, pp. 335-36.

² *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez*, Book 3, Vol. 12, p. 48.

As they exposed the untenability of reformist views, Communists emphasised that only consolidation of the Popular Front movement could guarantee the practical realisation of its programme; and they took steps to activate the Popular Front and to reinforce its structure. At the end of July 1936 the PCF leadership appealed to the people to broaden the Popular Front and form a French Front that would bring together all those defending national independence. As the *History of the French Communist Party* shows, that slogan "associates proletarian internationalism with defence of democracy and national interest menaced by Hitler fascism."¹ In championing the idea of a French Front, Communists were hoisting the standard of French national unity in the fight for the country's independence, against German aggression and the treachery of the latter-day Versaillians pushing the country into capitulation to fascism.

In the summer of 1937, when the Popular Front's opponents were very much on the warpath, the PCF advocated the calling of a National Congress of Popular Front Committees, one of whose tasks was "to provide the government with popular support against the resistance of the 200 families".²

The people supported the PCF's policy of widely promoting a mass movement in support of democracy and national interests. Testimony to that was the rapid growth in party membership (from 30,000 in 1934 to 341,000 in 1937—i.e., more than eleven times!³). But Communists did not succeed in fully overcoming the resistance of the leaders of the Socialist and Radical parties who were banking mainly on cooperation with the bourgeoisie and damping down the mass struggle.

The complex international situation on the eve of World War II, the Civil War and Italian-German intervention in Spain, and differences on those issues among Popular Front parties all combined to hamper its activity. Blum was an architect of the ill-fated "non-intervention" policy that enabled fascist Germany and Italy to intervene and bring down the Spanish Republic. That evinced strong criticism from Communists and progressives. Contradictions within the Popular Front deepened too over the divergent interpretation of government economic policy. The communist call to broaden and bolster the Popular Front by involving all patriotic forces in it and establishing a system of grass-roots committees did not get the backing of socialist and radical leaders.

The right-wing and centrist SFIO leaders and the Radical Party leadership wished to confine themselves to superficial moves, put the brake on popular initiative and thereby enabled big capital to

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, p. 328.

² *Ibid.*, p. 336.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 307, 343.

recover lost ground. The big bourgeoisie was not unsuccessful in fanning contradictions within the Popular Front, implanting mistrust among wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie in the Front's leading force—the working class. The Front's weakening also stemmed from the fact that it remained an alliance at the level of party leadership and did not rest on the network of grass-roots committees.¹

From the spring of 1937, the Popular Front movement fell into decline as it experienced more and more difficulties. The SFIO leadership, having turned down the communist proposal to organise resistance to the onset of reaction, preferred to take the course of capitulation. Blum resigned the premiership in June 1937, and the successive cabinets of the Radicals Chautemps and Daladier advocated the discontinuation of Popular Front policy. On 29 September 1938 Daladier put his name on behalf of the French government to the shameful Munich Agreement to dismember Czechoslovakia. The Socialists and Radicals in parliament approved of that act which ran counter to the Popular Front Programme. Communists voted against the foreign policy which distorted the very essence of the idea of anti-fascist unity, branding it a triumph of class selfishness. The 1936 parliamentary majority collapsed and the Communists went over to the opposition. In October 1938 the Radical Party adopted a decision at its Marseilles Congress to break with the Popular Front. All that was attended by a growth in anti-communist and anti-Soviet trends in France's home and foreign policy. When in late November 1938 the CGT called for a 24-hour general strike in protest at the onset of reaction, the government brought down on the working class the whole might of the repressive machine. A state of emergency was declared in the country, resulting in mass lockouts and arrests, and a groundswell of anti-communist propaganda. Altogether, it had a disorganising effect on the strike participants.

The Popular Front's triumph in France was shortlived, but its role in the history of the nation and the international labour movement was immense. Inside the country the Popular Front movement led to a radical qualitative shift leftwards of the whole of French politics. It foiled reaction's attempt to establish a fascist dictatorship. The alliance between the working class and middle sections of the population reinforced the country's democratic institutions. The consolidation of left forces even under a bourgeois legal order brought important results in improving the social living conditions of the working people.

During the Popular Front years the French working class considerably strengthened its position. The French Communist Party ultimately became the leading force of the French proletariat, determin-

¹ See *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 8, 1973, p. 83.

ing the country's development to an ever growing degree. The experience and traditions of the Popular Front prepared a militant cooperation of all patriotic forces of the nation in the anti-fascist Resistance movement.

NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN SPAIN

The national revolutionary war of the Spanish people was the culmination in the upsurge of the labour and democratic movement in capitalist countries in the latter part of the 1930s.

The struggle by progressives for a new, free, Republican Spain was exceedingly complex, full of ups and downs, successes and defeats conditioned by the country's balance of class forces, the peculiarities of its political traditions, the degree of concerted action by workers and the strength of their relations with other downtrodden classes and strata, first and foremost the peasants.

Two camps confronted one another: one relying on the working class, part of the peasantry, the democratic intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie and national groups on the periphery of the country—such as the Basques, Catalonians and Galicians; the other headed by a bourgeois-landowner alliance uniting around it all the most rabid reactionary elements in Spanish society—from the pro-fascist military, the monarchists, traditionalists and clerics to the most backward sections of the peasants and middle strata drawn into the net of nationalist clerical propaganda.¹

In the early 1930s the urban proletariat amounted to some 2 million people, most of whom were concentrated in Catalonia, the Basque and Asturias regions, as well as Madrid, port cities and mining centres in the south. Together with agricultural workers the overall size of the working class was approximately 4-4.5 million. Urban and rural workers belonged to socialist or anarcho-syndicalist trade unions.

The world economic crisis had a deep-going effect on Spain's economic system. The more than halving of commodity exports led to a huge balance of trade deficit and disruption in the financial system. By early 1933 the country had in excess of 1.2 million unemployed. Not a single category of Spanish workers enjoyed the right to unemployment benefit.²

The worsening of the country's economic situation, higher unemployment and economic troubles caused a step-up in social struggle by the working people. Its effectiveness, however, was weakened by disunity in the democratic camp.

¹ See S. P. Pozharskaya, *Madrid's Secret Diplomacy*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 20-28 (in Russian).

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 4, 26 January 1933, Vol. 13, p. 87.

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) was the biggest workers' party. Socialists were also in charge of the biggest trade union organisation—the General Workers' Union (UGT). As the political crisis unfolded, the PSOE, whose leaders had cooperated with the dictator Primo de Rivera, began to move into opposition to the regime and, in October 1930, concluded an alliance with republican bourgeois parties for joint struggle against the monarchy. Yet even in opposition, the PSOE leaders continued to reject an independent political role of the proletariat, seeing it merely as an auxiliary force within the anti-monarchist coalition. As a result of that stance taken by the most influential workers' party, a split formed between the proletariat's leading role in the mass struggle and its subordinate status in the political system. It was some time before the rift could be healed.¹

The second influential force was the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) whose creed was "libertarian communism" which could be achieved, it was thought, through spontaneous popular insurrection and destruction of the state. The Anarchists headed the second biggest trade union organisation, the National Confederation of Labour (CNT). In their anti-monarchist campaign the Anarchists also took a dim view of the bourgeois-democratic state, would not cooperate with the anti-monarchist opposition and, in 1930 and 1931, did not take part in elections, which helped to preserve sectarian views among the workers. The sharp disagreement between Socialists and Anarchists, as well as the anti-communism inherent in both camps, were serious setbacks to labour strength.

The Communist Party of Spain (PCE) alone worked for proletarian hegemony in revolution. The Third PCE Congress in August 1929 pointed to the coming of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, underlining that the proletariat should take a leading role in it. But vicious repression seriously hampered the party's activity and debilitated it. What is more, it had not completely rid itself of sectarian elements in its work.²

As the working class stepped up its activity in the mass anti-monarchist and anti-dictator movement, its influence on the course of events also increased, foiling the plans of those who hankered only after a "revolution" at the top and palace revolts with army support or by various political combinations. The reason for the exceptional vitality of the Spanish revolution lay in the aspiration by the proletariat to be up to objectives of the moment, even though it did not yet have adequate organisational and political expression.

¹ See *Historia del Partido Comunista de España (Version abreviada)*, op. cit., pp. 46-47; see also *Spain. 1918-1972. Historical Essay*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 58, 59 (in Russian).

² See Dolores Ibarruri, *El único camino*, Moscow, 1976, p. 149.

In circumstances of mounting political activity by the working class, peasant unrest, student riots and anti-monarchist ferment in the army, Primo de Rivera found himself utterly isolated and had to resign at the end of January 1930. Yet that was to be merely a temporary gain. A fresh revolutionary crisis was not long in coming. It was apparent in stormy strikes, peasant and labourer seizures of landlords' lands and the preparation by bourgeois republicans of a series of armed uprisings. In August 1930 a meeting of republican parties' leaders adopted a policy of bringing down the monarchy by force. Things did not reach that pitch however. The municipal elections of 12 April 1931, which had actually become a nationwide plebiscite, brought complete victory to the uniform slate of Republicans and Socialists. Immediately after the results were known, the councils in many of the largest cities proclaimed a republic; two days later King Alfonso XIII went into exile, though without abdicating the throne.¹

The downfall of the monarchy had occurred peacefully. It was quite clear, however, that the outcome of the revolution begun with the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic republic crucially depended on whether and to what extent the problem of working-class unity would be resolved.

Weakened by dissention, the Spanish working class in 1931 was unable to convert reaction's retreat into a full-blown rout. It could not gain hegemony over the course of the sixth Spanish revolution and ensure the achievement of its paramount objectives. To a large extent the spontaneous nature of popular struggle for a republic allowed the republican bourgeoisie to subordinate the popular movement to its leadership and for some time avoid transforming the country's social and political structure. Landownership, the economic power of the finance oligarchy and the positions of reaction in decisive spheres of the state machinery and in the armed forces remained untouched. Consequently, after partial success (adoption of a Republican Constitution, separation of the Church from the State and progressive labour legislation),² a reverse process began. Speculating on economic difficulties and cleverly making use of worker discontent with the contradictory and inconsistent policy of the republican-socialist coalition government, reaction strengthened its positions.

With the establishment of a fascist regime in Germany, the political aspirations of Spanish reaction began to acquire a pro-fascist character. Between February and March 1933, right-wing Catholic groups set up the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right Forces

¹ See *Spain, 1918-1972. Historical Essay*, p. 66.

² See S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. 1931-1939*, pp. 42-45 (in Russian).

(CEDA) which declared "socialism, Marxism and the Masonic Order" to be evils that had to be rooted out. The Spanish Falange (FE), a fascist party, was formed at the end of October 1933. The combined forces of reaction were making a broad onslaught on the revolution's gains. And at the Cortes elections in November 1933, victory went to the right-wing parties which had been able subtly to play on peasant discontent at not obtaining any substantial benefits from revolution. With the coming to power of the right-wing parties a "black two-year reign" commenced with a sharp polarisation of socio-political forces and an intensification of the class struggle.

Revolutionary development in the previous period had enabled the working class to accumulate rich political experience. It shed illusions engendered by the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic regime and it developed a conviction in the need for promoting mass struggle by a united front of all worker and democratic forces.

From early 1933 the country witnessed a popular struggle for a democratic way out of the crisis.¹ Official statistics show as many as 1,127 strikes in 1933 involving 843,000 people and causing 14,500,000 lost working days.

The left tendency or Caballerism grew much stronger within the Socialist Party, throwing down a challenge to the reformist leadership. In January 1934 Francisco Largo Caballero who had headed the PSOE in October 1932 was elected General Secretary of the General Workers' Union. Several of his speeches in which he called for resolute struggle against reaction made a big impression on workers and met with their sympathy. The PSOE Chairman declared that in the event of the CEDA taking power, the Socialist Party would respond with an all-out general strike and even armed insurrection.² Those positive shifts within the PSOE and its top bodies considerably expanded possibilities for improving relations between it and the Communist Party of Spain.

The new communist party leadership headed by José Díaz was pursuing a policy of setting up a broad anti-fascist Popular Front. From early 1934 the PCE frequently appealed to the PSOE, the UGT, the CNT and FAI to establish a united workers' front; the appeals were finding an ever wider response among rank-and-file workers.

The first open test of strength took place in October 1934. The entry of CEDA representatives into government provoked a wide movement of protest up and down the country, which took the form of a general strike accompanied in some places by armed insurrection. The Asturias workers inscribed the most glorious page in the October events. In the Asturias a Red Guard came into being which disarmed

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 4, 26 January 1933, Vol. 13, p. 87.

² See S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, 1931-1939*, p. 102.

government troops, took over a number of arsenals and munitions factories, seized Oviedo and transferred power to a worker-peasant government of the Asturias. But lack of unity among workers on a nationwide scale, rifts between the working class and peasantry and insufficient technical preparation for an uprising all contributed to the ultimate defeat of the Asturias workers.¹ Reactionary forces succeeded in putting down the general strike and unleashing an unrelenting terror against the working class and its organisations.

All the same, success by reaction was shortlived and already by 1935 a new revolutionary situation had matured. Political protests against official terror and in defence of its victims and for an amnesty for political prisoners had all expanded considerably. After a new government crisis the Cabinet was forced to rescind martial law under popular pressure in June 1935 and grant workers' organisations certain freedoms.

Within the socialist and republican parties the mood for forming a bloc of all democratic forces, including Communists, gained favour. In December 1935, on communist initiative, a National Committee was formed for relations between the Communist and Socialist parties. And in June the PCE voiced the idea of establishing a Popular Front with a programme that met the essential interests of workers, peasants and all oppressed ethnic groups in the country. As a programme for uniting anti-fascist forces the party proposed confiscating (without redemption) landlords' land and transferring it to the poorest farmers and farm labourers, giving the right of self-determination to the people of Catalonia, Huesca and Galicia, ensuring overall improvement in the working conditions of workers and peasants, declaring a general amnesty for political prisoners. The programme found ready accord among all who cared for the fate of a democratic republican Spain.

Joint struggle for liberating political prisoners after the October 1934 uprising, the coming together of union and youth organisations prepared the ground for the next step—joint protest demonstrations in Spain's biggest cities in autumn 1935 and the creation of a system of alliances in which all labour organisations were represented.

The Seventh Comintern Congress played an important part in bringing Communists and Socialists together.² On 15 January 1936, representatives of the Communist Party, the socialist and the left republican parties, the Republican Union (UR), the General Workers' Union, the United Marxist Workers' Party (POUM) and several other political groupings signed the Popular Front Pact. The Popular

¹ Y. M. Teper, *Flames Over Oviedo (Asturias Epopee)*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian).

² See *The Communist International*, 20 November 1935, p. 1036.

Front programme was very moderate and envisaged an amnesty for political prisoners, the restoration of constitutional liberties, various measures of state assistance to the peasants, better living conditions, improved social legislation and schooling, the restoration of the law on agrarian reform in Catalonia, support for the petty bourgeoisie, and a public works programme.¹

The Communist Party was not fully satisfied with this programme. It saw the main flaw in lack of a clear-cut demand for agrarian reform.² The programme did not take into account proposals by workers' parties to nationalise the banks, establish workers' control and help to the unemployed. Nevertheless, Communists firmly believed that even that compromise platform could serve the cause of unity of popular forces and bring ultimate victory over the forces of reaction and fascism.

Elections of 16 February 1936 brought a resounding victory to the Popular Front. With the support of the parties of the left, the Manuel Azaña left republican government was formed proclaiming its intention of being guided in practical activity by the Popular Front programme.

Workers in the towns and peasants in the countryside did not wait for permission to tackle burning social issues. During mass actions the people established workers' control at factories, set free political prisoners and confiscated landed estates. The direct pressure by working people forced the Azaña government to pass several important decrees that met popular interests. The beginnings of an agrarian reform were laid. In April 1936, the government solemnly proclaimed the right of all peoples in Spain to autonomous rule. And workers' living conditions improved to some extent.

It was the Communist Party that was largely responsible for mobilising the people and all the nation's progressive forces for implementing the Popular Front programme. The party made great efforts further to consolidate the united workers' front. With its full backing the Socialist Youth Federation and the Communist Youth League merged in late March 1936 into the United Socialist Youth (JSU) organisation. Four workers' parties in Catalonia, including the Communists and Socialists, united into the single Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC).

The Spanish workers had begun to lead the democratic struggle. But opportunist, sectarian and separatist trends and ultra-left attitudes, the cult of spontaneity and decentralisation did not give way without a fight. Of all the members of the labour movement only the Communist Party had worked out a clear-cut and, as events

¹ See *Spain. 1918-1972. Historical Essay*, p. 203.

² See *Historia del Partido Comunista de España (Version abreviada)*, p. 108.

were to show, solely correct and realistic programme of struggle. The Communists provided an example of strict, really revolutionary discipline in work and battle, without which the victory of popular revolution was unthinkable. The other parties in the Popular Front were unpardonably slow to appreciate the errors and disasters of the irresponsible improvisations made by advocates of "libertarian communism" and anti-communism, and the political vacillation of the centrists and left-wingers in the Socialist Party.

Meanwhile, the collaborationists, in cahoots with monarchists, were secretly preparing an armed putsch to which the Falangists actively acceded. It started in the Spanish zone of Morocco on 17 July 1936. Backing from the fascist powers of Germany and Italy which had provided the putschists with transport planes back in late July enabled them to land in Spain and spread the putsch to the whole country.

But the plans of General Franco swiftly to seize power were foiled by the heroic struggle of the common people, particularly the working class whose organising centre was the Communist Party of Spain. Popular resistance was so strong and valiant that fascism straightaway found itself on the defensive. On 18 July a general strike was declared with the backing of all workers' organisations. In the largest industrial centres the workers set up people's militia detachments, courageously attacked putschist barracks and destroyed those hotbeds of counter-revolution. The working class armed itself independently, so that by early August some 300,000 people, mainly workers, were under arms.¹ By 30 July 1936, the putsch had been suppressed in most of the country and the putschists found themselves in trouble. They were saved from utter defeat by the fascist powers which commenced intervention in Spain.

The military aid and intervention of Germany and Italy altered the nature of the Spanish people's struggle. It became a national revolutionary war. As Dolores Ibarruri wrote, "It was national because the people were fighting against the powers of foreign intervention threatening to turn Spain into a colony of the Italian-German imperialists; it was revolutionary because the Spanish people were fighting to preserve, strengthen and develop democratic freedoms won in a long and bitter struggle against Spanish reaction."²

A distinctive feature of the beginning of armed popular struggle against the military fascist putsch was the concerted action of the workers and the leading part played by the working class and its

¹ See K. L. Maidanik, *The Spanish Proletariat in National Revolutionary War, 1936-1937*, Moscow, 1960, p. 99 (in Russian).

² Dolores Ibarruri, "The Spanish People's National Revolutionary War Against Italian-German Interventionists and Fascist Putschists, 1936-1939", *Voprosy istorii*, No. 11, 1953, p. 35.

parties in organising a rebuff to the putschists. Communist party activity was outstandingly crucial; party membership quadrupled between February and July 1936 to reach 102,000. From the very first it did a great deal of practical work in repulsing fascism. In proclaiming the need to implement a broad programme of social and economic revolutionary change, the party advanced to the forefront general democratic and national, anti-fascist objectives of the struggle. Basing itself on the Seventh Comintern Congress decisions and soberly taking into account the objective and subjective conditions of struggle, the PCE set out the slogan of a "new type of democratic republic" which would retain a parliamentary regime yet be free of the economic basis for the domination of landlords, the big bourgeoisie and the Church, in which the working people would be drawn into running the country's political and economic affairs, and where the necessary guarantees would be created for consolidating the new system, particularly a people's army.

The fight against the putschists and foreign intervention required a high degree of mobilisation and concentration of all forces. At that responsible moment in history, however, the inner unity of the Popular Front was found wanting. While the Communist Party was doing everything possible to organise resistance and to safeguard the Republic, the Anarchists and Caballerists were hell bent on "intensifying the revolution", insisting on slogans of establishing a one-party (PSOE) dictatorship or Spain's conversion at one fell swoop into a "libertarian communist" country. They thereby prevented any strong rearguard action by loudly heralding their intention to "take the revolution to the end" and, at the same time, opposing any strict revolutionary discipline and formation of the armed forces in defence of the republic, and favouring decentralisation of power.

In Catalonia and Aragon Anarchists and Trotskyists from POUM pushed ahead with forced "collectivisation" in the countryside, socialised small enterprises needlessly and pursued a policy of "self-government", thus creating utter chaos and confusion. Those actions weakened relations that had been set up between the working class, peasantry and urban middle strata when the Popular Front had come into being.

The situation was not helped by the passive stance of the first Popular Front government headed by Largo Caballero (September 1936-May 1937) in regard to the ultra-left "experiments", by its inability to establish centralised control over the economy and the weakness of its military policy. Caballero's supporters actually opposed democratic agrarian reform. Fearing stronger influence of the Communist Party now that it was in government, the Caballerists held up the formation of a regular army for some time. Only the

firmness of the Communists forced them to take that step and set up an institution of political commissars. Those measures considerably enhanced the fighting capacity of the republican army. On all battle fronts against the putschists, the Communist Party was the major and decisive force of resistance. It sacrificed its best people. The famous 5th Regiment the party set up and other military units became the nucleus of the republican army, giving it solidarity, discipline and a fighting spirit.

During the critical days of the defence of Madrid and subsequently, the international revolutionary movement came to the aid of the Spanish working people. Communist parties all round the world and the Comintern saw help to the Spanish democrats as their prime internationalist duty, as the salient area of struggle against fascism, for world peace and democracy. Comintern leaders gave the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain much assistance with theoretically and politically experienced personnel. In its analysis of events in Spain, the Comintern Executive Committee Presidium proceeded from the principle that the main task of the PCE was to fight for a democratic republic and to gain complete victory for democratic and revolutionary forces over fascism and counter-revolution.¹ In its resolution of 10 October 1936, the Comintern Executive Committee Secretariat drew the PCE CC's attention to the need for resolute struggle against extremist experiments by Anarchists and Caballerists, who were threatening Popular Front unity and all the gains of the Spanish revolution. On Comintern initiative, a far-flung movement of solidarity with Republican Spain was launched throughout the world.² Soviet diplomatic, material and military assistance was of particular value.³

The international proletariat and all the world's anti-fascists rallied in support of the Spanish Republic. A World Committee in Support of the Spanish Republic was set up in Paris; but the greatest manifestation of solidarity with the Spanish people was organisation of international brigades with volunteers from as many as 54 countries.

The people of Spain and international brigade members defended Madrid in the autumn of 1936. On 25 November the fascist onslaught was stopped in its tracks and the Madrid triumph enabled republican forces to stabilise the situation on the fronts and consolidate the domestic situation. They suppressed a left extremist putsch in

¹ See M. T. Meshcheryakov, "The Communist International and the Fight of the Communist Party of Spain Against Fascism (1936-1939)", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 2, 1969, pp. 46, 48, 49.

² See M. T. Meshcheryakov, *The Spanish Republic and the Comintern*, Moscow, 1981, p. 49 (in Russian).

³ See Chapter 1 of this volume for further detail.

Catalonia in May 1937 and foiled Caballerist attempts to undermine Popular Front unity. Largo Caballero was forced to resign. In May 1937 a second Popular Front government was set up, with communist participation and headed by the Socialist Juan Negrín. That August representatives of the PCE and the PSOE signed a United Action Pact. And the process of purging union organisations of right and left opportunists made considerable progress.

The second Popular Front government made important social and economic changes. As Dolores Ibarruri has written, "It demolished the domination of the finance-landowner oligarchy, the Church and the army in the country's political and economic affairs; it set up a people's army; it carried through an agrarian reform; it transferred part of industrial enterprises, transport and banks to democratic state control; in general terms it satisfied the national aspirations of Catalonia and Huesca; it opened the doors of universities and institutions to the common people. These reforms were guaranteed by the new government with the active and direct participation of the masses. This was no longer a bourgeois government. It was a people's government being carried out by the parties of the working class and the petty-bourgeois republican parties, by Catalanian and Basque nationalists with the participation of trade union organisations. The republic underwent profound changes which, although not extending beyond the framework of the bourgeois constitution of 1931, nevertheless converted it into a democratic parliamentary republic of a new type, a precursor of the people's democracies which came into being in Europe after the Second World War."¹

The people's own experience and the lessons of war and revolution accelerated the change-round, begun in the autumn of 1936, of the bulk of the workers towards accepting the major tenets of the programme advanced by the Communist Party. The labour movement was ridding itself of reformist illusions and ultra-left attitudes, the spontaneity cult and particularism. The PCE as the vanguard of the working class came to occupy a leading position in the Popular Front, thereby being able to affect the widest sections of the public. The republic's worsening military situation and the threat of losing national independence owing to the expanding Italian-German intervention inspired the Communist Party to seek a new form of anti-fascist patriotic coalition on the basis of national unity, putting defence of the nation's sovereignty as top priority. The new line found embodiment in the slogan and policy of the National Front.²

¹ Quoted from *International Meeting Dedicated to the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Seventh Comintern Congress, Prague, 21-23 October 1965*, Prague, 1966, pp. 206, 207 (in Russian); see also *Spain. 1918-1972. Historical Essay*, pp. 231-33.

² See M. T. Meshcheryakov, *The Spanish Republic and the Comintern*, pp. 142-51.

But there was no time to implement the new policy as the international situation too took a serious turn for the worst. Towards the end of 1937 the situation at the battle fronts was going against the Spanish Republic, aided and abetted by Italian-German intervention, the "non-intervention" policy of the Western powers and the defeatist mood of some elements in the Popular Front.

The tragedy of the drawn-out war produced in some people, especially bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata, a sense of fatigue and loss of confidence in victory. A mood of capitulation palpably began to show in that milieu after the autumn of 1937, and it began to predominate in March 1938 when the Republic split into two after the Franco forces had broken through the Aragon front. After the loss of the North in October, right-of-centre and rightist elements became much more active within the Popular Front; the capitulation campaign developed under the slogan of fighting for a compromise peace at any cost, including the giving up of socio-economic and political gains that the Republic had made.

In the final year of war the hungry yet still valiant people, having spilled much blood, especially the working class, had to fight both at the battle front and against the clamouring capitulationists. In their midst there also grew a plot led by Colonel Casado who took charge of a junta which staged a coup in the night of 4 March 1938. After this treacherous stab in the back the Republic could no longer hold on.¹

The importance of the Spanish workers' heroic fight against fascism and for a new democratic Spain is immense. The Spanish proletariat, relying on the international solidarity movement, was first to put up armed resistance to international fascism. As Dimitrov wrote in July 1938, by the fight they put up the Spanish republicans had held up the unleashing of World War II: "Had the German and Italian fascists succeeded in achieving in Spain the rapid victory they contemplated, this would undoubtedly have resulted in a tremendous intensification of the effrontery and aggressiveness of these warmongers toward other nations."² The national revolutionary war in Spain was a tremendous trial in the fire of which many outstanding figures of the Resistance movement of World War II were tempered.

The experience of the Spanish working class had considerable impact on the ability of the communist movement to work out a common platform for democratic anti-fascist revolution. Communist parties analysed the Spanish experience from the standpoint of working out tactics and strategy of fighting for socialism in a situa-

¹ For more detail, see S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, 1931-1939*, pp. 167-71, 182-83, 193-211.

² *The Communist International*, No. 8, August 1938, Vol. XV, p. 704.

tion of promoting democracy to the limit and in forms that most corresponded to the traditions of each specific country.¹ As a result, they set out the idea of the special character of state power born in the crucible of class struggle against internal and external counter-revolution and with the existence of the socialist Soviet Union; that state power would be a genuine "people's democracy", "a democratic republic of a new type".²

The national revolutionary war in Spain and the fact that for 32 months the Spanish Republic, in exceedingly unpropitious circumstances, was able to withstand virulent attacks by domestic reaction and international fascism testified to the enormous power invested in the Popular Front and the policy of national unity of patriotic forces. A major distinction of the Popular Front in Spain was that it was, in the words of Dolores Ibarruri, "a broader organisation..., it was a classical example that confirmed the revolutionary significance of unity of all democratic strata".³ The Spanish experience provided very rich initial material for the communist movement to draw up a policy, during World War II, of anti-fascist national fronts which was to play a vital role in promoting the Resistance movement.

ANTI-FASCIST MOVEMENT IN ITALY

In fascist Italy the active intervention of the state in the economy could not save it from the shattering blows of the crisis. The most troublesome year was 1932 when gross output nosedived 26 per cent by contrast with 1928. By official figures, unemployment topped the million mark at certain periods: in fact every fourth Italian worker spent long periods out of work. In addition there was the roughly million unemployed agricultural workers.⁴

In fascist conditions almost all citizens were deprived of political rights, but the working class was hit hardest of all. The lack of bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms directly damaged the economic and social interests of the working people and disarmed them in the face of capital's onslaught. Measures came into force through

¹ See Dimitrov's speech to the ECCI Secretariat meeting on 18 September 1936 on the Spanish question (*Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 3, 1969, p. 13); see also *The Communist International*, August 1938, No. 8, Vol. 15.

² José Díaz, *Tres años de lucha, colección erbo*, Paris, 1970, p. 349; see José Díaz, *Under Popular Front Banner. Speeches and Articles, 1935-1937*, Moscow, 1937, p. 160 (in Russian).

³ *The Comintern and Its Revolutionary Traditions*, Moscow, 1969, p. 161 (in Russian).

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 59, 19 November 1931, Vol. 11, p. 1056; N. P. Komolova, *Modern Italian History*, Moscow, 1970, p. 93 (in Russian).

the corporations and fascist trade unions that intensified work, depressed wages and stifled the workers' economic struggle. Terror, the ban on parties, on protest meetings and any mass action very much complicated organised resistance to that anti-worker policy.

Bourgeois opposition to fascism was extremely tentative. Part of the liberal bourgeoisie was not averse to engaging in "moral criticism" of fascism, but was firmly opposed to practical action. Although fascism did in some measure encroach upon the rights of individual capitalists or even a faction of the bourgeoisie, it acted as a shield for the whole of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In its economic policy fascism served the interests of capital.

Only the proletariat remained the most consistent opponent of fascism. The workers' economic actions laid the foundation to the anti-fascist Resistance movement. In 1930 as many as 10,000 textile workers in Varano and Borgia were on strike for eight days in protest at wage cuts. Strikes, protest demonstrations, unemployment marches and actions by farm labourers and artisans took place in a number of other places. As many as 100 strikes occurred in 1933, and 70 strikes a year between 1934 and 1937. During these actions the working people acquired political experience that brought them to take part in the anti-fascist Resistance. It was the workers, peasants and artisans who comprised the great bulk of participants in the underground anti-fascist Resistance.

Of all outlawed parties only the Communist Party (PCI) was able to organise itself underground as a national political force at the head of the anti-fascist Resistance. As the chief of the fascist secret police political department Guido Leto admitted later, "Almost all the victims of the Special Tribunal were, naturally, Communists, in so far as all other parties in the country showed no signs of life."¹ By the end of 1933 communist underground cells in which 4,000 Communists operated were active in all the big towns and many enterprises. Communists endeavoured to use legal opportunities for conducting the anti-fascist struggle and began working in the mass fascist organisations, primarily the fascist trade unions.

Being the only party with a nationwide illegal organisation and, consequently, also high prestige amongst anti-fascists, the Communist Party had a considerable impact on all other anti-fascist forces. All the main principles of communist party work began to meet with more and more understanding among the broad democratic public: recognition of the leading role of the working class in the anti-fascist struggle, the need for underground anti-fascist work in Italy itself, the organisation of mass anti-fascist action, and the setting up of a united anti-fascist front.

¹ Guido Leto, *OVRA. Fascismo-Antifascismo*, Rocca San Casciano, 1952, p. 166.

Particularly great shifts occurred in the attitudes of Italian social democratic leaders abroad. Paris was the venue in July 1930 for a congress proclaiming the merger of the Italian Socialist Party (Maximalists), the Unitarian Socialist Party (Reformists) and the Matteotti Party into the united Italian Socialist Party (PSI) headed by Pietro Nenni and Giuseppe Saragat. The new party called itself Marxist and recognised insurrection as a legitimate means of proletarian struggle, although it devalued the practical importance of that by not even mentioning the possibility of illegal struggle against fascism in the main political report at the PSI congress. The new PSI leadership, however, pursued a policy of getting together with the Communists.¹ The first pact on concerted action was signed between the PSI and the Communist Party in August 1934.

A fresh impulse in the fight to form an anti-fascist front came with the decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress. At a PCI Central Committee meeting in October 1935, the General Secretary Ruggero Grieco announced that since the fight against fascism had a democratic character, victory over fascism could lead to the establishment of a Popular Front government, in transition to a revolutionary government. That elucidation of the goal of anti-fascist struggle removed objections from allies of the working class who were not ready to view proletarian dictatorship as a direct aim of anti-fascist struggle.

The Brussels Congress of Italian Emigré Anti-Fascists of October 1935 displayed an interesting alignment of forces. Communists insisted that the anti-fascist unity programme be democratic and countenance the possibility of it being joined by any opposition evident within fascist organisations. On the other hand, Socialists took up a sectarian position, claiming the need to give a socialist character to the anti-fascist unity programme. Members of the Justice and Liberty group uniting the democratic intellectuals felt that Communists had overestimated the possibilities of setting up opposition within fascist organisations.

It was certainly not an abundance of revolutionary enthusiasm that brought Socialists and left-wing bourgeois anti-fascists to take that position. Underground organisations of the PSI and the Justice and Liberty group had not succeeded in making contact with the broad mass of people or in combining underground anti-fascist activity with the mass movement in any durable way. The narrowness and weakness of those underground organisations of Socialists and petty-bourgeois democrats created grounds for sectarian sentiments and underestimation of the anti-fascist potential of wide sections

¹ See G. S. Filatov, *Downfall of Italian Fascism*, Moscow, 1973, p. 83 (in Russian).

of the common people. On the other hand, only the Communists had had any marked success in demoralising fascist organisations; they were in fact at the head of opposition that was forming inside them.

On the whole, the movement within the anti-fascist underground favouring anti-fascist revolution had immeasurably more durable social and political contacts and represented wider social strata than any other political detachments of the anti-fascist movement.

The leading role of Communists within the anti-fascist movement led to the creation of the first anti-fascist association in which they played the chief part. In the summer of 1936 the Italian Popular Union came into being in France, comprising some 50,000 Communists, Socialists and anti-fascists. Later the Union was joined by Catholic anti-fascists. At the same time an agreement was concluded on a merger between the General Confederation of Labour and the Socialist Italian General Confederation of Labour. The formation of the Italian Popular Union made it possible to bring together various anti-fascist tendencies which jointly organised several protest actions against Italian fascist aggression in Ethiopia (Abyssinia).

The German-Italian intervention in Spain that had begun in the summer of 1936 provoked a unanimous outcry among Italian anti-fascists of all hues. Some 3,500 anti-fascists from Italy fought on the side of Republican Spain. For the first time virtually complete unity of action by all left anti-fascist forces in Spain was achieved. That experience of joint struggle had a favourable effect on the development of anti-fascist unity in Italy. In July 1937, the Communist Party and the PSI signed a new pact on concerted action. It specified that both parties were in favour of setting up a Popular Front and launching a mass anti-fascist movement with the aim of defeating fascism and establishing a democratic republic.

The continuing war in Spain led to increased fascist repression in Italy and the loss of many anti-fascist fighters. In 1937 Antonio Gramsci died as a result of long incarceration in a fascist gaol. The decline in mass struggle and activation of reactionary forces on all fronts, the whipping up of anti-Soviet and anti-communist feeling on the eve of World War II again worsened the atmosphere within the Italian anti-fascist movement. It was clear that the prospects for an anti-fascist revolution in Italy, as elsewhere, were now dim. The major issues now were concerned with preserving peace, and these held the attention of the international labour movement. In the course of discussion within the Italian anti-fascist movement it was evident that rifts were developing. Giving way to anti-Soviet hysteria, PSI leaders went so far as to break with anti-fascist unity. In September 1939, they tore up the pact on concerted action between Communists and Socialists, and shortly after the Italian Popular Union disintegrated.

Despite all that the efforts to unite anti-fascist forces were not entirely in vain. The common anti-fascist programme, whose outline was visible already on the eve of war, subsequently became the programme of the left wing of the Resistance movement. Although groups in the anti-fascist underground movement were scattered, they did manage to maintain their battle readiness, and the Communist Party throughout events came to the forefront as the leading force. As Luigi Longo noted, "Our struggle though still limited, inadequate and difficult, helped to inculcate in the masses a spirit of hatred of fascism, and in particular helped to instill class, anti-fascist consciousness among the working people, and national-patriotic anti-fascist consciousness among the more enlightened intellectuals, students and the youth who so enthusiastically took up the battle for Italy's renewal and progressive development, the battle against the abhorrent and discredited fascist regime."¹

The accumulated invaluable experience of joint anti-fascist struggle hugely speeded up the formation of an anti-fascist Resistance front in Italy during the war.

FIGHTING REACTION AND FASCIST ONSLAUGHT IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

The prewar decade was a period of a fresh acute worsening of all contradictions of social development in this region. The countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe were a weak link in the chain of world capitalism. As a result of the narrow domestic market, dependence on foreign capital and fluctuations in the world capitalist economy, they had to pay a high price for the crisis. At its peak the decline in industrial production was 48 per cent in Poland, 44 per cent in Czechoslovakia, 40 per cent in Romania, 35 per cent in Bulgaria and 22.3 per cent in Hungary. Virtually half the industrial workforce in Czechoslovakia and 43.5 per cent in Poland were idle. Unemployment affected the great bulk of the urban workforce, enabling entrepreneurs sharply to step up exploitation. Labour intensity rose substantially, while nominal wages fell on average from 15 to 55 per cent.² The position of workers employed in small and handicraft production was particularly onerous.

The rural population, making up the bulk of the populace in all

¹ Luigi Longo, "A Powerful Force for Change", *World Marxist Review*, No. 4, April 1976, p. 4.

² See *The Seventh Comintern Congress and the Fight to Set Up a Popular Front in the Countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 26, 30.

countries in the region, was in the same dire straits as the urban workforce. The sown area and head of cattle fell drastically, and both cereal farming and livestock breeding were depressed. Everywhere people had to sell their property because of debts and arrears. Right up to the end of the 1930s chronic unemployment continued in all areas of the region with only minor fluctuations.

Reactionary regimes did what they could to beat the crisis, intensifying control over the economy, broadening and fortifying the positions of state-monopoly capitalism. But the trend towards transferring the burden of the crisis to the working people and the national minorities remained dominant in economic policy. That policy, which meant a further drop in living standards, produced unprecedentedly acute social conflicts which the authorities endeavoured to suppress and confine.

Political regimes became more and more reactionary. Parliamentary democracy suffered a deepening crisis, and the vast bulk of citizens were pushed beyond the pale of participation in political affairs. Violation of legality, trampling upon political rights and liberties, restriction of democratic principles, including parliament's legislative and controlling functions, diminution in the role of self-government all narrowed the social basis of the parliamentary form of government. It remained solid only in Czechoslovakia where the level of mass politicisation was higher and where mass left political parties existed.

The state-bureaucratic apparatus intervened with increasing vigour in all areas of politics, striving to implement reactionary policy by concentrating power in the hands of a single person and intensifying the authoritarian nature of the regime. In Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia the prerogatives of authoritative institutions were increasingly transferred to monarchs, in other parts of the region to increasingly autocratic rulers usually closely associated with the army. At the culminating stage of the crisis dictatorial military-authoritarian regimes were established in Bulgaria and Greece. All those regimes veered towards the fascist states of Italy and Germany, which intensified even more the fascist danger within their countries.

Fascism in these countries developed in several directions. Dictatorial regimes became more and more fascist, preempting terrorist methods of ruling from the fascist states, fascist ideological jargon and political experience in forming parties after the fascist pattern ("non-party bloc of cooperation with the government" followed by "national unity camp" in Poland; the "national renaissance front" followed by the "party of the nation" in Romania; the "Yugoslav radical peasant democracy" and the "Yugoslav people's party"; the Hlinka Slovakian People's Party, and so on; in Hungary the gover-

ning party of national unity claimed just such a role). True, all those parties normally remained superficial bureaucratic formations unable to broaden their social and mass basis. Everywhere communist parties, save in Czechoslovakia, were outlawed. No small effort was made to deprive the working class of union organisations. The ruling classes tried hard to subordinate the labour movement to themselves, to create a corporation system, to unify the trade unions and introduce compulsory arbitration. Both the one and the other only partially succeeded (in Bulgaria and Romania corporations took the place of the banned trade unions; they were similar to corresponding institutions of fascist Italy).

In their search for effective methods of implementing coercive functions in regard to the common people, the propertied classes were increasingly inclined in one way or another to imitate the experience of "classical" fascism. In most countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe fascist groupings and organisations came more and more to life, putting pressure on the ruling groups and striving to gain power for themselves; they included Codreanu's Iron Guard in Romania, the "Will of the Nation" (1934), renamed in 1939 the "Arrow Cross" in Hungary, the National-Radical Camp in Poland, banned in July 1934 yet continuing to operate underground, etc. By using demagogy, fascist groupings in Romania obtained 16 per cent of the votes from false election returns in 1937, while Hungarian National Socialists gained a quarter of the poll at the 1939 elections. The social base of such organisations in other countries was narrower. As a rule, it excluded the peasants almost completely. The General Gajda grouping on Czech lands had an even smaller impact. The mounting fascist trend in political regimes was an intricate and contradictory process owing to the peculiarities of the region's socio-economic and political development, and of the genesis within it of state-monopoly capitalism, and to the relatively low level of politicisation of the people.

As a result of the multistructural nature of the economy, an extremely complicated social structure (it consisted of strata and classes both typical of capitalism and inherited from feudalism), the scattered nature of political forces (representation of interests of various strata and classes still remained imprecise and insufficiently formed politically) and the absence of firm democratic traditions, the region's countries had an exceedingly unstable political system: not a single party or group jostling for power had a lasting superiority, and they were all governed by a constantly changing coalition. That reflected the instability of the political stance of the various social groups and strata. Cabinets came and went and parliamentary helplessness was becoming increasingly apparent.

As a compensation for the weakness of the ruling classes and power bodies, the armed forces more and more vigorously took upon themselves several functions of the state apparatus within the framework of military-authoritarian dictatorship—both the military and the coercive function. The ruling political groups felt more secure when relying directly on armed force. The use of military units to deal with the unemployed and strikers, to pacify mass peasant demonstrations and to suppress the liberation movement of national minorities was becoming a daily event. Often a state of emergency was introduced and courts martial operated.

Acting as a very well-organised political force, reactionary military circles more and more actively intervened in politics. They made sure the right had the upper hand by directly repressing the people and by pre-election terror, as a general rule. The armed forces reinforced their political positions by propagating the notion of a powerful national state and the high authority of the armed forces—a guarantor of the country's strength internally and abroad. By taking more and more state affairs under their control, the armed forces brought about a situation where rejection of several democratic institutions and observation of civil rights and liberties took on a juridical form. In Poland (1935), Romania (1938), Yugoslavia (1931) and a few other countries new constitutions were adopted that infringed upon the rights of representative bodies and augmented those of the authoritarian power and broadened the field of activity of the army and the whole coercive apparatus. The role and power of the bureaucracy also rose.

The adoption of new legal acts by no means signified a stricter observation of law and order. Representative bodies were frequently disbanded, and during elections the voting results were widely annulled or just blatantly falsified—as in Romania, Hungary and Poland. It was not unusual for worker protest meetings and demonstrations to be fired upon, for the peasants and members of national minorities to be brutally dealt with in reprisals. The coercive apparatus more and more actively intervened in class conflicts, inasmuch as the system of their “peaceable” forced settlement was not producing the goods.

The constraints on political possibilities for legal and semi-legal left parties (social democratic, peasant and other petty-bourgeois parties) increasingly narrowed their field of activity and helped to rid the people of any illusions about the democracy of the ruling regimes and the potential of parliament. While in opposition, however, those parties as always took fright when it came to extra-parliamentary workers' action and did not appeal directly to the people. The fragmentation of political forces and the narrow channels for people's interaction with their political representation hampered any

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unity of opposition and effectiveness of struggle, begun in the early 1930s, for democratising the political system. As a result the reactionary regimes managed quickly to put down any opposition.

During the 1930s the multiparty political system came to grief with a vengeance just about everywhere. Only in Hungary and Poland did it formally continue to prevail, although in Hungary it was trampled on and weakened, the parliamentary representation of the Social Democrats was systematically reduced by gerrymandering. And opposition parties in Poland were thrust out of parliament in 1935 and practically lost any chance of affecting government. In other lands opposition left parties enjoyed an even more precarious quasi-legal status. In Yugoslavia, though formally dissolved after the 1929 reactionary coup, they continued to operate in politics by making use of legal loopholes left over by the 1931 constitution. Political parties in Bulgaria were officially disbanded in June 1934, yet they were clever enough to gain quite a few (a third in 1938) votes in the general elections. Opposition parties were disbanded in Greece in 1936 and Romania in 1938.

In those conditions, social democracy and peasant parties conducted a defensive struggle to preserve democratic institutions, and the social and political gains of the previous period. Attempts were made to gather together the opposition forces (without Communists) to repulse reaction and to form a common front with the liberal bourgeoisie so as to restore the parliamentary system on democratic principles. But only in Czechoslovakia did the labour and democratic movement succeed in safeguarding parliamentary democracy.

With the fascist danger growing, the communist parties of Central and South-Eastern Europe began more and more widely to interpret their political tasks. Having experienced an invaluable education of class struggle since the post-1917 revolutionary upsurge, they were markedly steadfast and ready for action. Because of the rampant white terror Communists had to operate deep underground, frequently to risk their lives and to pay with many years' imprisonment for spreading their convictions and maintaining contact with the working people.

The political preparation of the proletariat to fulfil its world-historic mission had certain specific features in the region owing to the wide social and occupational heterogeneity of the working class. Some of its sections belonged to a variety of structures and social and economic forms differing in maturity—from semi-feudal and lower forms of capitalist production to state-monopoly capitalism. That led to fragmentation and isolation of proletarian forces. What is more, the proletariat was constantly being replenished from other strata and classes, which put a brake on consolidation processes in

the labour movement, and in one way or another preserved the political multiplicity of the working class.

Communist parties attempted to obviate the ban on proletarian revolutionary parties and rely on mass legal organisations. In Bulgaria, for example, the Labour Party existed legally until 1934 (and was restored to legality in 1936) through which Communists managed to cooperate with Social Democrats and make contact with the opposition bloc of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. Communists in Yugoslavia took steps to form a legal United Workers' Party in 1935, and then the Working People's Party in 1937.

The turmoil of class battles, growth in opposition sentiments within society and accumulation by communist parties of experience—all enabled the Communists between the Sixth and Seventh Comintern congresses to seek fresh tactics and strategy more in accord with the historical situation.

Relying on decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress, communist parties advanced as a prime objective the need to bring down reactionary dictatorships and then consistently to democratise their countries; in the case of Czechoslovakia it was a matter of defending the Republic. Achieving that objective presupposed unity of the working class in a common workers' front, and the consolidation of all progressive and anti-fascist forces within a Popular Front.

Communist appeals for concerted action by the working class and for a Popular Front found an increasingly broad response among the workers, at protest meetings and rallies, in united front committees at factories, in strike committees and during mass anti-fascist campaigns. Yet the frequent communist proposals for cooperation usually came to grief on the outright rejection of social democratic leaders and trade union leadership because of their anti-communism and underestimation of the fascist danger, as well as their desire not to risk losing what remained of their legal political possibilities. Formal agreement on cooperation was achieved only in Czechoslovakia where the Communist Party was legal and possessed incomparably greater political possibilities than elsewhere. In Hungary Communists were unable to make even provisional contact with social democratic leaders and the policy of unity was implemented through the trade union movement, in particular by members of the United Trade Union Opposition joining the reformist unions. Communists did gain no small influence in them and prevented the etatisation of the unions on the fascist model. In Romania the same objectives were tackled through uniting class trade unions, by establishing contacts (1935-1937) with the social democratic and unitarian socialist parties. In Poland things were confined to provisional verbal pacts between Communists and Socialists not to make attacks upon one

another. Negotiations and interim pacts also occurred in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Everywhere the urge for unity of action increased after the trade union left (red unions) had rejected any organisational isolation and adopted the policy of working within reformist unions (the latter did not agree, however, to merge revolutionary and reformist unions). In Bulgaria Communists succeeded in launching work within the state Bulgarian Labour Union and depriving the authorities of the opportunity of manipulating it unreservedly. Although organisationally they did not manage to achieve working-class anti-fascist unity nationwide, they did implement it from below in the course of class struggle.

The communist parties initiated organised struggle of all progressive forces against reaction and the fascist danger, putting forward the Popular Front slogan. The Communist Party of Poland (KPP) proposed to the Socialists and Ludowites in mid-1935 a programme of joint struggle to bring down the "sanacja" regime.¹ In the middle of 1936 the Communist Party of Hungary was pursuing a policy of establishing a Popular Front and a Hungarian democratic republic. The Romanian Communist Party in 1938 put forward the slogan of fighting to establish a people's democratic republic. And in early 1936 the Bulgarian Communist Party formulated demands for restoring completely the democratic Tirnovo constitution, holding elections to the Popular Assembly on the basis of the previous electoral law and revoking anti-constitutional acts issued after the coup of 19 May 1934.² Communists of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia did not proclaim a republican slogan when drawing up a Popular Front platform. The Yugoslav Communists advanced the notion of a federation on democratic principles, having in mind the prospect of forming a democratic federal republic. In an appeal to other anti-fascists, they announced in January 1937 that they were foes of the monarchy, yet they did not include the republic slogan in the Popular Front programme since the other anti-fascist forces were not prepared to accept it.

Of fundamental importance was the new approach to the question of relations with the peasants that followed the adoption of the agrarian programme at the Sixth Comintern Congress. During the 1930s substantial changes had occurred within the peasantry, opposition moods had grown and a peasant movement had developed. Communists in Central and South-Eastern Europe where the peasants were in the majority, yet where their parties had at one time

¹ *Historia polskiego ruchu robotniczego, 1864-1964*, Vol. 1, Warsaw, 1967, p. 486.

² See K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, p. 194.

been associated with agrarian fascism, were more and more fully taking account of the social structure of the countryside and the revolutionary potential of various strata of peasants. Most communist parties recognised that both the poor and middle peasants could become allies of the working class in a proletarian revolution. Bulgarian Communists made strenuous efforts to establish cooperation with the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union resisting the country's fascistisation. The KPP endeavoured to cooperate with the Stronnictwo Ludowe who were putting up staunch resistance to the "sanacja" regime. Yugoslav Communists worked to involve peasant parties into the Popular Front. In Hungary, Communists took account of the potential of the party of small rural farmers for mobilising the peasantry in the fight against fascism. The Communist Party of Romania made contact with the Farmers' Front. And generally communist parties supported attempts at forming democratic peasant organisations. By the end of the 1930s Communists had been successful in establishing contact with left factions within peasant parties and organisations, and had accumulated a certain experience in leading peasant protest actions. A turning point had been reached in the attitudes of sections of the rural workforce. Even though the great bulk of peasants continued to follow the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, some peasants were beginning to desert the reactionary leadership of traditional peasant parties who were so hostile to the idea and policy of the Popular Front. Left tendencies began to gain ground inclined towards a worker-peasant alliance, to cooperation with Communists.¹

Democratic anti-fascist opposition took shape among the intellectuals, with which Communists managed to make contact.

The clear-cut patriotic stance of communist parties in regard to the mounting fascist danger in the region strengthened communist authority. They relentlessly campaigned against preparations for a new world war and exposed the policy of fascist Germany and Italy which threatened the national sovereignty of countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia appealed for the overthrow of the anti-popular regime and the formation of a national defence government. The Bulgarian Communist Party advanced the slogan of a national front in defence of the homeland. The Romanian Communists insisted on Romania staying outside the orbit of Hitler's policy. The Communist Party of Hungary took a similar stance, advocating the formation of an independence front. All the communist parties in the region oriented the anti-fascist for-

¹ See V. V. Maryina, "The Agrarian-Peasant Question in Communist Policy in Central and South-Eastern Europe Between the Two World Wars", *Sovetskoye slavyanovedenie*, No. 4, 1974, pp. 38-50.

ces to interaction with the USSR as a powerful ally in the fight against the aggressive foreign policy of the Axis powers.¹

On the eve of World War II opposition anti-fascist blocs appeared in the region with the participation of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and reformist parties (the "Five" in Bulgaria, the Popular Accord Alliance in Yugoslavia, the Initiative Committee for Coordinating the Struggle Against the Dictator Metaxas in Greece, etc.). Communists supported such blocs, striving to put popular pressure on them and to prevent those forces from cooperating with reactionary, dictatorial regimes.² They regarded such democratic alliances as factors in expanding the anti-fascist campaign, while cooperation with them was a possible step on the way to forming a Popular Front.

The anti-fascist campaign programme proclaimed by communist parties made it possible for initial popular front forms to appear (organisationally, its complete establishment was impossible without concerted action by workers' parties). The programme helped the subjective political factor of the impending revolution to mature and provided the political grounds for a national front policy which during the war united progressive and democratic forces of countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe around the working class vanguard in the fight for national and social liberation.³

* * *

In the early 1930s *Poland* was a country, like Germany, where the proletariat's class battles were particularly acute. One reason was the extraordinary depth and duration of the economic crisis. The plight of all categories of working people took a sharp downturn. At the height of the crisis, the employment level in Poland was the lowest in Europe. By 1932 every third worker was out of a job. In the next year the number of unemployed considerably exceeded the number of employed in large- and medium-scale industry. Out of the aggregate number of those working every third (in textiles it was every other worker) was on a short week.⁴ In 1934 the wage level was 44 per cent of the 1928 level. Workers without means of existence were doomed to slow starvation: unemployment benefits went only

¹ See I. V. Mikhutina, "Questions of Fighting Fascism and the Threat of War in Central and South-Eastern Europe Between 1935 and 1939", *Sovetskoye slavyanovedenie*, No. 1, 1979, pp. 15-21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ See K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, pp. 203-04, 207.

⁴ Zbigniew Landau, Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Druga Rzeczpospolita. Gospodarka, społeczeństwo, miejsce w świecie*, Warsaw, 1977, p. 144.

to 6 per cent of those losing their jobs and their pitiful amounts and time limits steadily diminished.¹

The agrarian crisis which continued until 1935 was accompanied by a growth in indebtedness of peasant farms and mass impoverishment of the peasants. The position of peasants in the national borderlands was extremely dire.

The governments of Pilsudski's generals that alternated during the crisis years did their best to remove the vestiges of democratic liberties, worker and peasant associations, and cruelly to persecute revolutionary organisations, to put down all parliamentary opposition, want only to repress any actions by working people, to introduce emergency courts and step up the militarisation and fascistisation of the country.

The working class and other sections of working people responded to reaction's head-on attack by intensifying the class struggle.

First to go into battle were the unemployed. Initially the mass demonstrations were largely spontaneous; but then the Communists who headed the movement of the unemployed gave it an organised character. On communist party initiative, the Day of Struggle Against Unemployment, which the Comintern had declared, was carried out in Poland on 6 March 1930. Demonstrations and protest rallies with the participation of communist deputies took place on that day in Warsaw, Grudziadz, Sanok, Wloclawek, Pabianice, Katowice and other towns. They were accompanied by clashes with the police. At the turn of 1930 and 1931 a new wave of mass demonstrations swept the country. Their participants were demanding unemployment benefits, provision of fuel and an end to eviction. In spite of police counteraction the Warsaw jobless tried to hold a hunger march through the streets on New Year's eve. Everywhere the unemployed took part in strikes and anti-fascist actions, lending them particular stubbornness and militancy. The movement of the unemployed activated other sections of the working class and was an important factor in staving off the onslaught of fascist reaction.

The strike movement which initially went into decline began to pick up from the middle of 1931 and continued for seven years.² This was primarily an economic battle, although often the movement put forward political slogans aimed against the "sanacja" regime, against the restrictions on civil liberties and infringements of the working class's gains.

In the early 1930s Poland was one of the foremost nations in the capitalist world in terms of its strike struggle. The battle was headed by workers of the large industrial enterprises. Strikes were be-

¹ 100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego. *Kronika wydarzeń*, Warsaw, 1978, pp. 134, 138, 144.

² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

coming increasingly protracted and stubborn: while only eight strikes lasted longer than 30 days in 1930, two years later there were 29. The authorities took increasingly stringent measures to suppress the strikes, at the same time trying to bring in compulsory arbitration to settle conflicts.

A new form of strike, the "occupation" strike (known outside the country subsequently as the "Polish strike"), began to be popular at the time of bloody repression after 1931 when the military courts came into operation. In an attempt to avoid vicious strike repression, workers occupied enterprises and allowed no one in for several days and even weeks.

According to official figures there were four occupation strikes with 7,200 participants in 1931, 48 in 1932 and 137 in 1933 with 43,300 and 45,000 participants respectively.¹ Some 70-80 per cent of the strikes ended in partial or complete success for the workers.²

Workers' organisations played an important part in the struggle. Between 1929 and 1933 trade union membership fell. A number of unions, for example the metal-workers, builders and wood-workers, lost up to half their members. In order to activate the trade union movement and more effectively to protect the working class's interests at such a difficult time, on TUI initiative Communists set up the Trade Union Left Caucus (*Lewica Związkowa*) in 1931, uniting over 50,000 people. This association, like the "class unions" headed by the PPS, took an active part in organising workers' action. Strikes frequently occurred under the leadership of worker representation bodies elected by the workers—action committees, strike committees and other in which Communists had a strong influence. What was achieved was joint action by Communists and Socialists during the mass strikes.

A general protest strike was called for 16 March 1932 in response to the publication of government anti-worker bills (envisaging a worsening in social legislation and the social security system, an increase in the working week, etc.) It involved more than 300,000 workers and was accompanied by massive demonstrations and clashes with the police.³ Workers succeeded in putting off for a year the Sejm's ratification of the anti-worker bills.

The year 1933 was the toughest for class battles by the proletariat. On 6 March a strike of textile workers began in Łódź, which rapidly spread to the surrounding area, to associated branches of the industry, to metal-workers, builders and handicraft workers. The strike was a no-nonsense affair: real battles with the police and strikebreakers took place in front of the factories. Anti-fascist worker demon-

¹ *Historia polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, Vol. 2, p. 431.

² *Ibid.*, p. 439.

³ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, p. 135.

strations passed in front of the German consulate in Lodz. During the strike elements of a worker-peasant alliance emerged: the local peasants took part in rallies and demonstrations and brought foodstuffs for the strikers.

The peasant movement also took more acute forms during the crisis years. Mounting peasant discontent with the "sanacja" policy promoted consolidation of the peasant political parties: the Polish peasant organisations united in the Stronnictwo Ludowe (SL) (the Peasant Party) on 15 March 1931.

In April of the next year most Polish counties had a one-day strike of agricultural workers protesting at the 35 per cent wage cut. Trade union associations of various political persuasions took part in organising it. In many places the action was directed by Communists. In 1932 peasant action took a mass character and was headed by both SL figures and Communists. The following summer the peasant movement became even stronger, and its orientation against the "sanacja" policy was more pronounced. In the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia the peasant and national liberation movements merged.

Communists working underground headed the mass struggle, undeterred by vicious repression. In 1930 as many as 6,500 Communists operated illegally in freedom, while 3,800 were incarcerated; three years later for the 17,800 members of communist organisations (the Communist Party of Poland, the Communist Party of Western Byelorussia, the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine and the Communist Youth League of Poland) operating at large, 10,000 were in prison.¹

Communists relied on legal mass organisations—the PPS-Lewica (Workers' Party), on the association of peasant left, Samopomoc, the mass Ukrainian organisation Sel-Rob and the Byelorussian revolutionary deputy club Zmahanije. But in February 1931 the PPS-Lewica was dissolved and its activists and leaders thrown into gaol. Soon after Samopomoc, Sel-Rob Jedność, Zmahanije and organisations linked with them went the same way.

The restrictions on parliamentary democracy and attempts to amend the constitution to strengthen the "sanacja" regime's autocracy evinced mounting legal opposition in the Sejm. Its left wing comprised the PPS which in 1929 had adopted a resolution calling for a campaign to bring down the "sanacja" regime. Deputies of left parties and the centre managed to set up the Centrolew alliance which could call on over 40 per cent of deputy votes and had a vote of no confidence passed in the government. In June 1930 there took place

¹ *Historia polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, Vol. 1, p. 441; *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, p. 139.

a Congress in Defence of the People's Rights and Liberties, advocating an end to the prevailing regime and the formation of a government that had the trust of "the Sejm and society". Centrolew tried to appeal to the people, noting that it would hold rallies throughout the country in September.¹ But the alliance proved unable to repulse the reactionary offensive just begun. Its leaders feared a popular movement and fenced themselves off from Communists and the entire revolutionary tendency in the democratic struggle.

During the Sejm elections in November 1930 some 4,000 Communists and their sympathisers, 5,000 opposition figures, including many deputies of the dissolved Sejm, were arrested. The electoral lists of Communists and organisations cooperating with them, as well as part of the Centrolew lists, were declared null and void. As a result more than half the seats in the Sejm went to the non-party alliance of cooperation with the government set up by the Pilsudski party. Reduction in left-wing representation in the Sejm accelerated the demise of Centrolew. It has to be remembered that Communists had underestimated at the time the importance of democratic slogans and the consolidation of all democratic forces, had not displayed proper consistency in fighting to set up a united anti-fascist front. They had tried to unite the workers only from below, to overstep necessary stages in historical development and to force on the course towards proletarian revolution.² But appreciation of the experience of class battles and the search for political solutions capable of stopping the fascist onslaught all enabled the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) to work out a more sophisticated policy to achieve concerted action by the working class, for the day-to-day economic interests and political rights, against the "sanacja" dictatorship and growing danger of Hitlerism, for unification of all anti-fascist forces.

In the post crisis five years the strike movement continued to grow and reached its peak in 1936 and 1937 when more than 4,000 strikes took place with in excess of 1,200,000 people involved.³ The working class foiled attempts by the government to reduce to naught the strike movement through compulsory fascist arbitration and unifying the trade unions on the pattern of fascist corporations. It put up a stubborn fight against anti-worker bills, particularly against the bill that envisaged a strong curb on the public's voting rights.

Together with attempts to damp down the fire of class struggle by means of anti-worker legislation, the authorities continued to try to scare the workers into submission by terror. Between 1931 and

¹ Antoni Czubiński, *Centrolew*, Poznan, 1963.

² For greater detail see Józef Kowalski, *Trudne lata. Problemy rozwoju polskiego ruchu robotniczego, 1929-1935*, Warsaw, 1966.

³ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, p. 158.

1937, 250 workers died from police bullets.¹ That is why the workers increasingly resorted to the occupation strike. In the prewar years occupation strikes were the principal element in the Polish worker economic action. The following figures testify to the widespread nature of the occupation strikes:

Table 11

| | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | Total |
|--------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Occupation strikes | 193 | 390 | 963 | 1,093 | 713 | 3,352 |
| Strikers (thous.) | 25 | 45 | 138 | 162 | 83 | 453 |

Source: *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, p. 154.

The total of occupation strikes rose right up to the spring of 1938 when the Supreme Court served notice that such strikes were illegal. Even so the authorities were powerless to crush the strike movement. Stiff popular resistance further came from the government's intention to remould the unions on the fascist model. Communists, union leaders from the PPS and even leaders of the right-wing Trade Union Centre (Swiazek Stowarzyszen Zawodowych, SSZ) opposed the government bill, and it failed to unify the unions on the fascist pattern. Popular striving for joint unions so as to organise a joint rebuff to the policy of the authorities markedly rose. From 1935 concerted action was achieved in many strikes by various trade unions. The proposal made by the LZ in 1934 to merge with the Trade Union Centre gained wide support from trade union members. The leaders of the Centre were obliged to act accordingly. In September 1935 the Communist Party Central Committee adopted a decision to disband the LZ formed in 1931 and get its unions to join the appropriate industrial unions of the Centre. That year the Centre had 222,000 members, which had jumped to 348,000 in 1937.² The KPP Central Committee Sixth Plenum in February 1936 was in favour of unity with workers in the right-wing unions.

The wide scale of the strike struggle and the consolidation of the union movement helped to shore up the position of the working class. Ruling groups had to set aside fresh attempts to put a legislative curb on the right to strike by using compulsory arbitration. Between 1937 and 1939 the Sejm passed laws on collective agree-

¹ J. Borkowski, "Nie wykorzystane szanse II Rzeczypospolitej", *Nie wykorzystane szanse II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw, 1978, p. 97.

² *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego...*, p. 165.

ments, on reducing the working day in the mining industry and paying overtime rates.

The Communist Party sharpened up its tactics, adopting vigorous measures to form a united front and proposing the elaboration of its programme. The party leadership frequently appealed to the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) between 1933 and 1934, proposing to cooperate in the fight against fascism and for democratising the country. In November 1934 it put forward the Popular Front slogan. Those initiatives helped strengthen the desire of rank-and-file Socialists to cooperate with Communists.

The left wing markedly fortified its positions within the Socialist Party. The left-wingers gathered about Norbert Barlicki, Adam Próchnik and Stanislaw Dubois displayed a critical attitude to collaboration, an enhanced interest in Marxist-Leninism and the experience of the October Revolution in Russia. The left Socialists rejected the reformism of right leaders and advocated stepping up the fight against the "sanacja" regime and involving the poorer peasants in it. The 23rd PPS Congress in February 1934 also demonstrated a desire on the part of many delegates to alter party policy; it adopted the slogan of a worker-peasant government.

The left Socialists also began increasingly to favour coordinating the actions of workers' parties and concluding a pact on a united front between the socialist and communist parties, the Bund and other socialist organisations in the fight against the "sanacja" regime with the prospect of working out a common programme for the revolutionary transformation of society. Strictures from socialist leadership could not prevent the achievement of joint action between Socialists and Communists at grass-roots level.

Meetings of Socialists and Communists took place and pacts between them were signed in the summer of 1934 in worker districts of the main industrial centres—Warsaw, Lodz and Upper Silesia. For the first time since 1919 a conference took place, on 17 February 1935, involving worker delegates from Warsaw elected by 75,000 workers. Organised by Socialists and officials of the "class" trade unions with the active cooperation of the Communist Party, it came out against the regime's home and foreign policy and defined the working class's positions in relation to economic, social and political issues. The Communist Party of Poland, the Polish Socialist Party, the Bund and trade unions all took part in the work of the conference.

The left proposed in the Chief Council of the Polish Socialist Party in June 1935 establishing an agreement with other worker parties, including the Communists, on questions of combating fascism and opposing the foreign policy of the regime oriented on Hitler Germany. In August 1935, as a result of meetings between representatives of the Secretariat of the KPP Central Committee and the PPS Cen-

tral Executive Committee, a verbal agreement was reached on halting mutual recrimination and on joint campaigns in defence of democratic liberties and on promoting "class" unions.¹ Although the right-wing socialist leaders decided in November 1936 unilaterally to revoke the "non-recrimination" pact, left Socialists did not deviate from the policy of working with Communists. The promotion in 1936 of a joint socialist-communist election slate to the Lodz city council was a great victory for the left forces within the PPS. The joint slate obtained the greatest number of votes, and Norbert Barlicki, the leading light among left Socialists, became the council president; shortly after he took up the post of editor-in-chief of the *Dziennik popularny*, united front organ formed on communist initiative.²

The movement to establish a united front was becoming mass. The KPP advocated uniting all democratic and patriotic forces of the nation against the onset of fascism³; it concluded that if workers joined together in a united workers' front, safeguarding national interests and acting in alliance with the poorer peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals, they would become the leading force of society. In spelling out its strategy, the KPP was proceeding from the need to ward off Hitlerism which was stepping up claims on Gdansk and giving direct aid to Franco in crushing the Spanish Republic, which was evaluated by the party as the forerunner of an attack on the independence of the Polish people. Communists were the first to appreciate the scale of the fascist menace threatening the country, exposed the baneful effect of the "sanacja" policy that was leading to Poland's economic and political enslavement and further growth of fascism. The manifesto adopted by the Fourth KPP Central Committee Plenum in February 1936 had the following to say: "Only a worker-peasant Poland for which Communists are fighting will be really independent and able to defend itself from any aggression."⁴

Communists worked for revoking the 1935 fascist constitution, restoring democratic liberties, allotting land to the peasants, refusing to collaborate with Hitler Germany and concluding an alliance

¹ Józef Kowalski, *Komunistyczna Partia Polski, 1935-1938*, Warsaw, 1975, pp. 127-28.

² For more detail see R. Abramovich, "Dziennik popularny in the Fight for a Popular Front in Poland, 1936-1937", *Zarubezhnaya pechat*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 49-88.

³ For more detail see I. V. Mikhutina, "Revolutionary and Democratic Forces of Poland in the Fight for a Popular Front", *The Seventh Comintern Congress and the Fight to Set Up a Popular Front in the Countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 258-90; Józef Kowalski, *Komunistyczna Partia Polski, 1935-1938*.

⁴ *Dokumenty KPP 1935-1938*, Warsaw, 1968, p. 132.

with the USSR. At its Fifth Plenum in February 1937 the party rejected the direct orientation to a socialist revolution and drew up the conception of a broad democratic front as a version of the Popular Front. In the plenum decisions pride of place went to demands to safeguard independence and to ensure the country's security, to form "a democratic government", including on the initiative of socialist parties and the Stronnictwo Ludowe,¹ to reorientate Polish foreign policy towards a collective security system (together with the USSR, France and Czechoslovakia).

In the fight to set up a popular front Communists put an emphasis on practical unity of action and participation in the work of all anti-fascist organisations. They were playing a major part in the mass peasant actions. From the autumn of 1935 they managed to establish cooperation with local, district and regional organisations of the Stronnictwo Ludowe peasant party, despite the anti-communist stance of its leadership.²

Democratic intellectuals began to be drawn into the fight to form a Popular Front. In May 1936 Lvov saw an anti-fascist congress of people in the sphere of culture, called on the initiative of the Communist Party and left figures in the Socialist Party. At the next, 24th Congress in 1937 the Polish Socialist Party adopted a programme containing the slogan of worker-peasant government. Communist party leaders thought that if that government relied upon the mass movement the slogan could have the meaning close to a popular front.³

Although it was impossible on a national scale to heal the rift in the working class and unite the worker and peasant movements, important practical steps were taken in that direction. The campaign to unite all worker and democratic forces prepared ideological-political prerequisites for establishing proletarian leadership in the revolutionary movement.

In June 1938, the KPP Central Committee issued an appeal in which it pointed out the threat of Hitler Germany to the Polish people and state. It contained a call to set up a government for Poland's salvation relying on the people's trust.

Socialists were coming closer to that interpretation of national tasks in the months prior to Germany's attack on Poland. And on 23 March 1939 the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party demanded the strengthening of the country's defences by restoring civil liberties and creating a coalition government of

¹ Józef Kowalski, op. cit., p. 338.

² Wilhelmina Matuszewska, *Chłopski czyn u schyłku II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw, 1973, p. 53.

³ Janusz Zarnowski, *Polska partia socjalistyczna w latach 1935-1939*, Warsaw, 1969, pp. 205-08.

national defence. The Communists—political prisoners in the gaols of Warsaw, Rawicz and other cities—announced their willingness to join the army to defend the country and collected money from their own meagre sources to contribute to a national defence fund. Wider political actions were out of the question since, in the summer of 1938, the Comintern Executive Committee had dissolved the Communist Party of Poland, on the unfounded (as was established subsequently) suspicion that hostile agents had widely penetrated the top echelons of the party. Even after the dissolution, however, Polish Communists continued to operate, “using all the existing forms of organisation of the mass worker and peasant movement”.¹ The Comintern Executive Committee, specially recommended, in May 1939, the rapid preparation of the party’s restoration, but the start of war held up the implementation of that decision. The day before the Nazi invasion into Poland, 30 August, the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party and the Central Trade Union Commission issued a call “To the Working People of Poland’s Towns and Villages”, appealing for them to fight for the country’s freedom. But it was to be six years of Resistance before the Polish working class could unite its forces, when fascist Germany was defeated, to complete national liberation and to transform society in a revolutionary way in alliance with the peasants and the working intelligentsia.

In *Czechoslovakia* the economic crisis caused a sharp fall in industrial production and lower living standards for the working people. According to official figures, the country in early 1933 had some 1 million people out of work, and total wages of those working in 1933 comprised 65 per cent of the 1929 level. Effects of the crisis were particularly devastating in Slovakia, the Transcarpathian Ukraine and areas with German population. One consequence of the crisis was the acute intensification of class and national contradictions. The establishment of fascism in Germany gave a strong boost to reactionary forces within Czechoslovakia, and reactionary wings increasingly were coming to life in bourgeois parties, as well as fascist groupings strengthening their positions. In areas where the German population lived, the German secret service was hard at work; it had set up in the autumn of 1933 the so-called Sudetendeutsche Front (the Sudetendeutsche Party from 1935) under the leadership of Konrad Henlein. By unleashing virulently chauvinistic fascist propaganda, the Henleinites spread their influence to a large part of the populace of this area. Fascist elements had also gained the upper hand in the leadership of the clerical Hlinka Party and in Slovakia. The reactionary National Democratic Party had attempt-

¹ See *The Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, pp. 473-74.

ed to set up a mass organisation of Czech fascists—the National Union.

In Czechoslovakia, however, the social basis for a fascist movement was far narrower than, for example, in Germany. Not only the proletariat stood opposed to the spread of fascism, but also patriotic non-proletarian people who realised the direct threat of the annexation plans of fascist Germany to the country's independence. In pursuing a policy of cutting back on democratic liberties, the ruling groups were not banking on fascist reaction, fearing a weakening of their positions in the world. The main factor that prevented reactionary tendencies from developing into destruction of the bourgeois-democratic system was the vigorous struggle of the working class for its social rights and in defence of democratic liberties and national independence.

The political influence of the Czechoslovak labour movement was quite considerable. At the general election of the autumn of 1929 the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) gained 753,000 votes, or 10.2 per cent of the electorate. The Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party received 963,000 votes, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party picked up 767,000 votes, and the German Social-Democratic Party gained 506,000 votes. All the same, the policy of class collaboration being pursued by social democratic leaders on the basis of anti-communism was seriously undermining the positions of the working class. Social democratic leaders declared that capitalist society was moving to a state where "the interests of socialism will be identical with the interests of industrial capital and so representatives of workers and industry will be in one joint political front."¹ During the economic crisis, they maintained, it was the duty of social democracy "to concern itself with preserving production and the normal functioning of the economic organism".² In opposing strikes and other forms of class struggle, they and the trade union associations under their influence asserted that the working people's interests may be protected by coming to agreement with the entrepreneurs. Their hostility to mass political action and their anti-communism made it hard to mobilise the working class and all democratic forces for repulsing reaction.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) headed the working people's struggle for their rights. Communists made strenuous efforts to give the unemployed movement a mass character, setting up over 1,500 action committees of the unemployed.³ On 15 March 1931 Pra-

¹ *Těsnopisecké zprávy o schůzích poslanecké sněmovny Národního shromáždění republiky Československé. III. volební období, 4 zasedání, 115. schůze, 27.III.1931, Prague, 1931, p. 47.*

² *Dělnická rovnost*, 5 July 1931.

³ Klement Gottwald, *Spisy*, Vol. IV, Prague, 1951, p. 64.

gue witnessed the nationwide congress of unemployed which advanced a programme including demands to introduce unemployment benefits from the state and employers, to end redundancies and to cut the working day to 6-7 hours with no pay reduction.¹

The Communist Party united large numbers of unemployed through fighting in defence of their demands. The party was able to combine the unemployed movement with the fight of workers in the factories. Sometimes the unemployed movement grew into a general struggle against hunger, and merged with actions against the fascist danger.

The strike movement was widening. The strike of workers at the Frivaldov Quarry in November 1931 after the police had fired on a demonstration of workers and unemployed developed into a general political strike that involved the whole district. In March 1932 there flared up a strike by miners of the North Czech coal basin. Despite terror unleashed by the bourgeoisie, the sabotage and splitting activity of the reformist leaders, the strike embraced the whole area and became a general strike. The Central Strike Committee turned into an agency of proletarian power on the basin territory. On the KSČ Central Committee initiative, an organisational-political centre was set up in Most to head the strike. Klement Gottwald, Antonín Zápotocký, Nosek and other prominent figures in the party and red trade unions took part in directing the strike.² At the very outset put forward were the simplest and most understandable demands against sacking miners. As the scale of the struggle grew, specific economic demands were augmented by a number of political demands. During the strike workers acted in a united front. The movement of solidarity with the strike reached broad dimensions throughout the nation. The strike finally came to an organised end when the mine owners accepted the greater part of the miners' demands.

The Twelfth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee described it as one of the most significant in Europe during the world economic crisis, as "an exemplary model ... of conducting the united front policy from below".³ During the crisis years it was "*the most politically important mass struggle not only in Czechoslovakia, but throughout the European continent*".⁴

The proletarian strike movement combined with the struggle of working people in the countryside. In Slovakia agricultural workers went on strike several times and the rural poor took part in the movement. In 1932 peasants demonstrated in Bohemia and Moravia

¹ *Rudý dělník*, 16 March 1931, p. 83.

² A. Zápotocký, J. Šverma, *Hornická stávka*, Prague, 1932, p. 51.

³ *Twelfth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee. Verbatim Report*, Vol. 1, p. 50 (in Russian).

⁴ *Kommunistichesky Internatsional*, No. 10, 1932, p. 3.

against the forcible requisitioning of property for arrears. The peasant riots in the Transcarpathian Ukraine were particularly widespread; it was in this region that actions of the unemployed, workers and peasants grew into a nationwide battle against social and national oppression.¹

In heading the struggle to safeguard the vital interests of the working people, Communists worked to form a united workers' front. Although the reformist leaders of the trade union associations everywhere opposed communist efforts, a certain progress was made in the fight for a united workers' front. The main workers' actions had taken place in a united way. Striving to suppress the mounting class conflicts, ruling circles frequently resorted to armed force against demonstrators and strikers. Between 1929 and 1933 the police, gendarmes or troops fired on demonstrators a total of 27 times, with 30 people killed and dozens gravely wounded.

From the latter part of 1932 the task of averting the fascist threat acquired increasing salience. The KSČ Central Committee Plenum in July 1932 oriented the party towards stepping up the struggle in defence of the political rights of the working class, against bourgeois terror and fascism. Gottwald published his article "Unite, Fight, Win!" on 24 July, saying that "We Communists hold out our hands to all people of good will, all who really wish to fight for bread and work, for the rights and freedoms of working people, against fascism and the bourgeois terror, to all who wish to prevent what is happening today in Germany. To all those people we extend our hand and appeal to them to join us in common struggle. We are of the opinion that at the moment when a new wave of vicious fascist reaction threatens to flood the whole of Central Europe and cause untold suffering to all sectors of working people, the workers above all must find a common tongue and act in concert."² In March 1933, the KSČ Central Committee proposed to the leadership of all socialist parties to fight together against fascism and the danger of war.³ Although this initiative found ready acclaim among rank-and-file members of socialist parties, the Communists did not manage to break down the resistance of the social democratic leaders. In the campaign to establish a united front the Communists were not free of errors. They did not properly distinguish between social democratic leaders and reaction, and they assessed social democracy as "social fascism", which provided the opponents of unity with arguments to use to discredit the efforts of Communists in uniting worker and democratic forces.

In late 1933, owing to the heightened reaction in the country, the

¹ Václav Král, *Historické mezníky ve vývoji Československa*, Prague, 1978, p. 55.

² *Rudé právo*, July 24, 1932.

³ *Dokumenty moderní doby*, Prague, 1978, pp. 256-62.

KSČ went over to a semi-legal status.¹ Ably blending illegal activity with legal work in the trade unions and other mass organisations, parliament and the local councils, and relying on mounting anti-fascist sentiments among the working people, the KSČ managed to beat off the reactionary offensive and re-establish its legal status.

In the autumn of 1934 when fascist elements were on the march, aiming to win the forthcoming general elections, the party focused all its forces on organising a rebuff to fascist reaction. It proposed in November that year to form an alliance between KSČ and the social democratic parties against fascism.² On communist initiative anti-fascist front committees sprang up. In response to fascist outrages in November 1934 mass anti-fascist demonstrations took place in Prague, Brno and elsewhere involving even some social democratic organisations. At the parliamentary elections in May 1935 the Communist Party polled 850,000 votes, some 100,000 more than at the 1929 elections. The Czechoslovak Social Democrats picked 1,034,000 votes, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party gained 755,000 votes and the German Social Democrats—300,000 votes. At the same time, the number of votes cast for the Henlein Party also grew substantially: it received 1,250,000 votes. That testified to the mounting influence of the fascists among the German populace of Czechoslovakia. All the same, fascism was unable to triumph relying on the forces of internal reaction alone.

In the latter part of the 1930s defence of national independence came to the forefront of the political struggle. Communists pointed to the unbroken bond between the national interests of the people and the struggle against social and national tyranny, as they argued for the formation of a Popular Front of Work, Freedom and Peace.

The Seventh KSČ Congress in April 1936 drew up a policy for safeguarding the Czechoslovak republic against the threat of Nazi aggression, safeguarding democracy against fascism, and formulated a strategy of combining the fight for democracy and national liberty with the struggle for socialism. As Gustav Husák has noted, the main party policy was to promote the most diverse forms of democratic movement of all working people and achieve working-class leadership.

Communists viewed an end to national tyranny as an important orientation in the fight against the manoeuvres of internal and external fascist reaction. They advanced the slogan of uniting working people of all nationalities. In the summer of 1936 demonstrations swept the country under that slogan, and in November the KSČ Central Committee published a memorandum on the question of the

¹ *Průhled dějin KSČ*, Prague, 1976, p. 162.

² *KSČ—predvoj nového života*, Bratislava, 1971, pp. 53-54.

position of the German minority; in May 1937 it published a plan for the economic, social and cultural resurgence of Slovakia.¹ In opposing the chauvinism of Czech ruling groups and favouring the satisfaction of just national and cultural demands of the national minorities, the party steadfastly condemned nationalism and separatism of the Slovak and German fascist groups aiming to dismember the country. Party documents stressed that if the social and economic level of the various regions were brought into line and full national equality were secured, it would open up the best possible way to strengthening unity of all peoples in the country and thereby serve the cause of safeguarding Czechoslovakia's national independence.

Communists paid special attention to unity in the trade union movement. In February 1937 the Congress of Red Trade Unions called for the unification of union organisations. But the reformist leadership in charge of the biggest union associations hampered that unification.

With the establishment of fascism in Germany, communist warnings that the anti-Soviet policy of the country's ruling groups would create a threat to the nation's independence began to encounter understanding among widest sections of society. The possibility of losing national independence and the mounting pressure of the people combined to force the Czechoslovak government to enter into diplomatic relations with the USSR in June 1934 and to sign the Soviet-Czechoslovak Mutual Assistance Pact in May 1935.

The Communist Party fostered an understanding among the people that the fate of Czechoslovakia was closely bound up with the worldwide struggle against fascism and reaction, for the freedom and independence of the peoples. Protest demonstrations were taking place in the country against Nazi terror and in defence of Ernst Thälmann, Georgi Dimitrov and other anti-fascists who had fallen victim to Nazi terror in Germany; rallies of solidarity with anti-fascist movements in Hungary, Poland and other countries were being held. The working people gave every possible assistance to anti-fascists who had had to emigrate from their own lands. Publications of the communist parties of Germany, Austria, Poland and Hungary were now being printed within Czechoslovakia and then despatched into those countries.² Czechoslovak Communists headed the movement of solidarity with the Spanish people's fight against fascism, advancing the slogan "The Fight for Prague Is in Madrid". The committees of aid to democratic Spain set up in Czechoslovakia had some 750,000 individual and collective members at the end of

¹ *Prehľad dejín KSC na Slovensku*, Bratislava, 1971, pp. 232-33.

² See *The Seventh Comintern Congress and the Fight to Set Up a Popular Front in Central and South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 324-25.

1936.¹ And altogether 2,500 volunteers from the country fought in the Spanish people's national revolutionary war.

At the time when the country was threatened by Nazi aggression, only the Communist Party acted as a consistent and selfless defender of the Czechoslovak people's interests and the republic's independence.

With new threats from Nazi Germany against the country in the spring of 1938, the KSČ's Central Committee appealed: "Let the loud watchword ring out today throughout the whole of Czechoslovakia: 'Long live independent and free Czechoslovakia! Let us be resolute at all costs! Let us give our blood and lives for the liberty of the people of Czechoslovakia! Down with defeatism and cowardice!'"² The KSČ was appealing to all working people, to Socialists, to all democratic parties to come together to defend the republic. The communist slogan of a united front in defence of the republic and Czechoslovak independence with the participation of all progressive and democratic forces meant a switch to a national front policy laying the basis for uniting anti-fascist forces in the Resistance movement.

Stormy demonstrations swept the country in defence of the nation's independence. Under popular pressure the government was forced to declare partial mobilisation in May 1938. The Nazi plan to seize border regions through threats and blackmail came to nothing. After the government nonetheless announced its acceptance of Hitler's territorial demands under British and French pressure, the Communist Party called on the people to come out into the streets and demanded its resignation. On 22 September a general strike gripped the country. The people were demanding a new government capable of organising the Republic's defence. The Hodra government had to tender its resignation. It was then that Western powers came to the aid of the fascist aggressor. The shameful Munich Conference took place on 29 and 30 September 1938; Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini agreed on the partition of Czechoslovakia and the transfer of the Sudeten region to Germany, as well as part of the country's territory to bourgeois-landlord Poland and Horthy Hungary.

This monumental tragedy in the life of the Czechoslovak people signified the bankruptcy of the ruling bourgeoisie's policy and demonstrated its inability to preserve the country's independence. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was the only political force in the country, noted Gustav Husák, that was resolutely speaking out

¹ See *Solidarity with the Spanish Republic, 1936-1939*, Moscow, 1971, p. 305 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International*, No. 4, April 1938, Vol. XV, p. 406.

against the Munich sell-out by Western powers and capitulation by the big bourgeoisie of Czechoslovakia.¹

Between the signing of the Munich Agreement and complete Nazi occupation of the country Czechoslovakia was a state dependent on Germany and its domestic policy was bent on establishing a totalitarian regime. Right Social Democrats formed a National Labour Party blatantly collaborating with reaction. The government banned the Communist Party and it went underground.

On 15 March 1939 German troops occupied the territory of Moravia and the Czech lands which were then proclaimed to be German protectorates; a puppet fascist regime was established in Slovakia, and Horthy Hungary seized the Transcarpathian Ukraine. The fight to abolish the alien fascist tyranny and for national liberation henceforth became the major objective of the working class and all the country's patriotic forces.

In *Bulgaria*, the economic crisis led to workers' living standards falling greatly. Wages crumbled catastrophically, work conditions sharply worsened and the unemployment problem became particularly acute. Popular unrest produced an extensive wave of protest demonstrations and strikes on which basis a fresh upsurge in revolutionary struggle commenced.

On the eve of the 1931 parliamentary elections leaders of the bourgeois opposition formed a coalition under the name Popular Alliance (consisting of parties of democrats, national liberals, radicals and the bulk of the Agrarian Union) which succeeded in winning. The Popular Alliance government made certain concessions to the working people, declaring a conditional and partial amnesty. The weakening of the positions of reaction and growth in revolutionary mood led to stronger worker organisations.

The size of the Workers' Party grew from 6,180 members in 1931 to 35,000 in 1932, while the Workers' Youth League increased from 3,000 to 18,000.² And the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) and Communist Youth League operating underground also grew stronger. The Union of Friends of the USSR came into being, as did Worker-Peasant Solidarity, the Association of Militant Writers and the Bulgarian Common National Student Union. Marxist-Leninist groups united over 12,000 young men and women. Bulgarian Marxist and Soviet literature was fairly widely distributed in the country, and in 1932 Bulgaria published some 60 party, trade union and other progressive newspapers and magazines.

By the end of 1932 the Independent Workers' Trade Unions had

¹ See Gustav Husák, "Sixty Years of Fighting for the People's Happiness", *Pravda*, 14 May 1981.

² *History of the Trade Union Movement in Bulgaria*, p. 379 (in Bulgarian).

10,000 members¹, while by 1934 the reformist Free Alliance of Trade Unions had no more than between 2,000 and 2,500. Attempts by Tsankov, leader of the national social movement, to set up fascist trade unions came to nothing, as did efforts by right-wing members of the Agrarian Union who entered the Popular Alliance government and were striving to implant the so-called Gichev trade unions in Bulgarian soil (named after their leader D. Gichev).

At the same time the Popular Alliance government left in force the notorious Law on State Security and other reactionary emergency laws blocking the country's democratic development. In 1933 Workers' Party deputies were driven out of the Bulgarian parliament (Popular Assembly). The police carried out mass arrests of members of the Bulgarian Communist Party and activists of the revolutionary trade union movement. A terror campaign was unleashed, attacks were made on labour movement activists, and police agents or terrorists were responsible for the deaths of the BCP Central Committee Secretary Nikola Kofardzhiev, Central Committee member Georgi Moskov, Workers' Party Central Committee Secretary Petko Napetov and many others.

The Popular Alliance government was powerless to find a way out of the economic crisis and to halt the growing impoverishment of working people, which produced the rapidly rising discontent and the exacerbation of social conflicts.

From the latter part of 1931 the strike movement of textile workers in Yambol and Sliven, the tobacco workers of Pazardzhik, the workers of Varna, Gabrovo and elsewhere flared up with fresh force. Owing to the firm stand taken by workers 70 per cent of the strikes ended in complete or partial victory for the strikers.² The unemployed movement also came to life. The jobless organised protest demonstrations against mass sackings, demanded that the authorities take effective measures to guarantee employment, to stop price rises and to alleviate the position of the unemployed.

The heroic conduct of Georgi Dimitrov at his Leipzig trial had an immense impact on promoting the labour movement and anti-fascist concerted action by Bulgarian working people. The farcical fascist trial in Leipzig provoked a wave of anger in Bulgaria, and there began a movement of solidarity in defence of Dimitrov and his comrades. The legal worker press devoted enthusiastic articles to Dimitrov and published innumerable letters from working people.³ A Committee for the Defence of the Victims of German Fascism was set up in Sofia in June 1933 with the participation of members of all

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 404-05; *History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, p. 331.

² *History of the Trade Union Movement in Bulgaria*, pp. 389-90.

³ *History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, p. 345.

mass legal workers' organisations. The protest meetings and rallies organised by the Committee in defence of Dimitrov and other anti-fascists were eloquent testimony to the desire of democratic forces for united action.¹ As Dimitrov was later to comment on such manifestations of solidarity, "They were the rays of a real-live united front penetrating my prison cell."²

The successes of the Bulgarian labour movement might have been greater had not left sectarians predominated in the Bulgarian Communist Party leadership from the autumn of 1929; their erroneous ideas caused the party much harm. The left sectarian leadership required from striking workers that they should take the strikes to street battles and advance political demands when the objective conditions simply did not exist. It indiscriminately branded the Agrarian Union as agrarian fascist, and the Social Democratic Party as the chief danger to the labour movement, so it refused any joint action with them. Those leadership methods made it difficult to draw the mass of working people into the struggle.

In a situation where the country's democratic forces were disunited, where fascism was advancing internationally and capitalist contradictions were intensifying, reactionary groups once again resorted to fascist methods of suppressing the labour and democratic movement. A military-fascist putsch took place on 19 May 1934. In November of the following year the Kioseivanov government established itself firmly in power as a reliable instrument of the monarchist-fascist dictatorship. After the putsch the regime dissolved political parties and trade union organisations, established a ferocious censorship and did away with the vestiges of local self-government. Government decrees proclaimed the organisation of state trade unions of a fascist type. The authorities issued a decree on 11 January 1935 forming workers' union organisations controlled by the regime; in the following October they were to be united in the Bulgarian Labour Union (BLU). Civil servants at central and local levels were also forced into these trade unions. Artisans were to join the Artisan Union and peasants the Common Union of Agricultural Districts. The regime also set up unions of industrialists and traders. The entire activity of BLU and unions of civil servants was put under the direct control of the Ministry for Trade, Industry and Labour, as well as the fascist police.

Through demagoguery, coercion and terror the ruling groups succeeded in drawing into the state unions a large number of blue and white

¹ Todor Zhivkov, "Georgi Dimitrov beshe vinagi s nas", *Rabotnichesko delo*, 20 May 1972; N. Nedev, *The Leipzig Trial and the Bulgarian Anti-Fascist Movement*, Sofia, 1972, pp. 119-93 (in Bulgarian).

² Georgi Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 9, p. 390 (in Bulgarian).

collar workers (BLU had 163,000 members by 1939). And the Kioseivanov government outlawed strikes in August 1936.¹

The passive attitude of left sectarians within the Bulgarian Communist Party to actions by the fascist plotters caused considerable discontent among the party rank-and-file. Under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov, who were again in charge of the BCP after the Leipzig trial, along with experienced party members, the party fought hard to overcome the left sectarianism and work out a fresh approach to the problem of uniting anti-fascist forces. On 1 October 1935, the BCP Central Committee appealed to all party organisations, members and sympathisers, sending them an Open Letter in which it posed the task of stepping up the fight against the fascist dictatorship and for the restoration of democratic rights and people's liberties. The defeat of fascism, the letter said, could occur only through joint struggle by anti-fascist working people following the Communist Party, the Agrarian Union, the Social Democratic Party and other non-fascist organisations. The BCP Central Committee declared that formation of a united popular front was only possible with the energetic and leading participation of the proletariat.²

The Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee that took place in Sofia in February 1936 subscribed to the Seventh Comintern Congress decisions and emphasised the importance of setting up a united workers' and broad popular front against fascism and war, against the offensive of capital, and it outlined measures for achieving trade union unity of the working class.³

Bulgarian Communists did a great deal of energetic work in strengthening their organisations and extending contacts with the public at large. After two years of inactivity the Workers' Party that had been disbanded by left sectarians was re-established.⁴

Publication was renewed underground in 1935 of the Workers' Party newspaper *Rabotnichesko delo* (Workers' Cause) which acquired great popularity. Representatives of the Workers' Party made contact with leaders of other democratic parties with a view to establishing joint action by all anti-fascist forces, and its members joined the mass legal organisations of working people and worked

¹ V. Khadzinikolov, D. Mladenov, M. Isusov, A. Georgiev, V. Vasilev, *The Working-Class Strike Movement in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1960, p. 513 (in Bulgarian).

² *Illegal Appeals of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Sofia, 1954, pp. 126-30 (in Bulgarian).

³ *The Bulgarian Communist Party in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Vol. 3, Sofia, 1954, p. 331 (in Bulgarian).

⁴ S. Kolev, *The Bulgarian Communist Party Fight for a Popular Front, 1935-1939*, Sofia, 1959, p. 23 (in Bulgarian).

within them. The communist and workers' parties merged between 1938 and 1939, forming a single Marxist-Leninist Bulgarian Workers' Party (BWP).

Bulgarian Communists regarded it a crucial task to establish trade union unity. They worked persistently and systematically within the state unions, using any legal opportunity to organise the workers' fight and to expose the anti-worker policy of leaders of fascist unions. In the summer of 1936 the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee adopted a decision to disband the illegal Independent Workers' Trade Unions so as to focus all forces on work within the Bulgarian Labour Union and other state unions. Leadership of the entire anti-fascist union activity was entrusted to the Central Commission on Trade Unions specially set up by the BCP Central Committee; it comprised such eminent figures in the revolutionary trade union movement as Nacho Ivanov, Boris Blagoev, Todor Prakhov, Jordan Milev, Nikola Penev and Dragoi Kodzheikov. There were also commissions in individual unions and in the localities.¹ With the giving up of separate underground unions and its policy of working in the state unions, the party was able more closely to link up with the common people and more effectively to fight for their vital interests.

As a result of those efforts the leading bodies of the Bulgarian Labour Union and other trade unions were in the hands of Communists and progressive worker anti-fascists. On the eve of World War II anti-fascist workers were able to occupy firm positions in the leadership of a number of industrial organisations in Pernik where the great bulk of Bulgarian miners were concentrated. The anti-fascists had considerable influence in the leadership of tobacco workers' union organisations in Plovdiv and Khaskov, of workers union organisations of Gabrovo and other industrial centres.

One result of the activity by Bulgarian Communists in consolidating and organising concerted action by the working class was the strike struggle which developed in the prewar years. In mid-May 1936, the Plovdiv tobacco workers downed tools. They were joined by workers of tobacco factories in Khaskov, Asenovgrad, Dupnitsa, Gorna-Dzhumaya, Petrich and Pazardzhik. The tobacco workers' strike served powerfully to boost the class battles of textile workers in Sliven and Gabrovo, the garment workers of Sofia and Plovdiv, drivers, building workers, footwear workers and many others.² In 1937 shoemakers of Sofia and Plovdiv went on strike; the following year it was the Sofia building workers, etc. In 1938 alone there were

¹ D. Kodzheikov, V. Khadzhinikolov, Y. Yotsov, *The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1957, pp. 244-45 (in Bulgarian).

² *History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, p. 373.

57 strikes involving some 25,000 people; and 52 strikes ended in victory for the workers.¹

The end of 1938 and start of 1939 were marked by unrest among Pernik miners and those working in the mines located in the Panagyur area of Plovdiv region. Driven to despair by the harsh working conditions and miserly wages that did not even meet the most elementary needs, the workers stopped work and won a resounding victory after a stubborn struggle.

The staunch fight put up by Bulgarian working people forced the government to pass laws on minimum wages, individual and collective work agreement, paid one-week-long holidays and the establishment of a fund to help jobless tobacco workers.

At the same time, in response to growing communist influence within the Bulgarian Labour Union and other official trade unions the regime stepped up repression against individual figures and whole local organisations of the Union. Thousands of workers actively fighting against fascist tyranny and exploitation were expelled from the Bulgarian Labour Union. Yet those actions did not achieve their ends. They evinced merely indignation and angry protest from workers, which went clearly to show that fascism had not achieved "social peace" or crushed the will of the working class to fight.

In striving to gain broad anti-fascist unity among the common people, Communists were working hard in cooperatives, educational, women's, youth, sporting and other mass workers' organisations. Attempts by fascist elements to penetrate those organisations encountered resolute resistance from democratically-minded people. Under slogans of fighting fascism and upholding national independence, Communists united the mass of people, making use also of popular traditions and celebrating famous dates in the history and culture of the Bulgarian people. May Day was particularly widely marked; it had as its slogan the fight against fascism and the threat of war, for democratic rights and liberties, for the vital interests of the working people.

Bulgarian Communists did a great deal to pierce the shield of bourgeois propaganda and bring people the truth about the Soviet Union. Under pressure from the extensive movement of friendship with the Soviet people and basing itself on certain economic considerations over political and economic needs, the Bulgarian government established diplomatic relations with the USSR in July 1934. The ruling groups were forced somewhat to moderate anti-Soviet propaganda. And the Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship Society came into existence and developed its work in that period.

¹ See D. Kodzheikov, V. Khadzhinikolov, Y. Yotsov, *The Labour and Trade Union Movement in Bulgaria*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 265-66 (in Russian).

The Bulgarian people vigorously opposed ventures by international reaction as they intensified in the prewar years.

During the Spanish Civil War the working people of Bulgaria ignored the repressive measures of their government and launched a protest campaign against fascist intervention, in defence of the Spanish people. As many as 450 Bulgarians went as volunteers to Spain and more than a hundred of them gave their lives for the Spanish people's freedom. Bulgarian workers collected money and sent it through the International Red Aid to republican Spain. They also angrily protested at the shameful Munich deal and Nazi German occupation of Czechoslovakia. Those acts of international solidarity by the Bulgarian people, whose organisers were invariably Communists, boosted the authority and influence of the Communist Party.

In directing their main efforts on creating an anti-fascist popular front at the grass roots, Communists also tried to reach agreement with leaders of non-fascist parties —the Agrarian Union, the social democratic, radical, democratic and other parties. Taking cognisance of the popular mood, leaders of opposition parties had to change their openly hostile attitude to the popular front notion and in certain cases to agree to joint action with Communists. Thus, in the summer of 1936, agreement was reached on setting up constitutional committees, collecting signatures to a petition to restore the Tirnovo constitution, and holding free parliamentary elections. As a consequence of communist energetic work, a city constitutional committee was formed in Sofia, which actually was a nationwide organisation; constitutional committees of democratic women, students and writers were also set up. District constitutional committees sprang up in several quarters of the capital, and town and district constitutional committees operated in many towns and villages. Further established were youth constitutional committees headed by the Central Youth Constitutional Committee. The Constitutional Alliance, formed by supporters of the banned democratic parties with communist participation, launched a great deal of activity during elections to community councils, held in March 1937, and elections to the Popular Assembly in 1938. The Alliance's programme contained the following demands: to restore the Tirnovo constitution with all the rights and liberties inscribed within it, to revoke anti-constitutional decrees, to disband fascist organisations, to remove the unbearable debts of the poor peasants and to alleviate the tax burden.

Despite the terror launched by the monarchist-fascist government, Constitutional Alliance candidates gained some one million votes at the parliamentary elections. Only through fraudulent machinations and falsification of election results, the illegal depriving of communist deputies, of their mandates along with some

members of the Agrarian Union, as well as the government's winning over of some political turncoats, were ruling groups able to obtain a parliamentary majority.

With the start of World War II, some bourgeois opposition leaders, alarmed at the growing influence of Communists and especially at the scope of the communist-led popular movement for concluding a Bulgarian-Soviet Pact on Friendship and Mutual Assistance, turned their backs on the Popular Front then taking shape.

Hungary, like other capitalist countries in the world economic crisis, experienced a catastrophic fall in industrial and farm production, financial chaos, and an unprecedented reduction in domestic and foreign trade. The impoverishment and ruination of working people was on a scale never seen before. According to incomplete figures, unemployment in Hungary during the crisis years reached approximately 750,000-780,000, which totalled some 2-2.5 million people together with families, or 25 per cent of the population.¹ In their attempt to find a way out of the crisis the ruling classes brutally intensified exploitation and the totalitarian aspects of the Horthy regime which had openly allied itself with Hitler's Reich after the Nazis had come to power in Germany.

The start of the crisis was marked by an explosion of mass workers' strikes and peasant protests whose principal demands were as follows: an end to unemployment, higher wages and land to those who work it. On 1 September 1930 Budapest witnessed a mass demonstration involving some 100,000 workers, small artisans and peasants from neighbouring villages. The demonstrators proclaimed such slogans as "Work and Bread", "Aid to the Unemployed", "Long Live Liberty" and "Long Live the Soviet Union." Barricades went up in a number of places, on which red banners with "1919" emblazoned on them hung. Fierce fighting began between workers and gendarmes, police and troops, with much blood spilled. As the HSWP Central Committee noted in its theses on the party's 40th anniversary, "On 1 September 1930 Communists and left Social Democrats jointly organised and held a demonstration which brought together *hundreds of thousands of people* and was a remarkable battle feat of the Hungarian proletariat, with undoubted international significance."²

The ruling groups responded with terror and repression against the mass protests. In July 1932 the authorities arrested and, after cruel torture, executed Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst, secretaries of the Communist Party Central Committee. The vicious murder of Hungarian Communists provoked a wave of anger throughout Eu-

¹ Iván Kádár, *A munkásosztály helyzete a Horthy—rendszer idején*, Budapest, 1956, p. 148.

² "To the Fortieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of Hungary", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 1, 1959, p. 160.

rope.¹ During the 1930s the scope of the strike movement grew and, in 1935, over 16,000 took part in strikes, while the number of lost working days amounted to over 110,000; in 1936 there were some 21,000 strikers and over 332,000 lost working days. The major demands of the workers were higher wages and help to the unemployed. Some 20 per cent of strikes in 1936 ended in complete victory to the workers, 55 per cent in partial victory and 25 per cent in defeat.²

The strike movement intensified in 1937. And anti-government actions by poor peasants expanded; they were demanding land reform, universal suffrage by secret ballot, and democratisation of the country. In 1936 agricultural workers went on strike 39 times and succeeded in improving their working conditions: 33 per cent of the strikes ended in victory for the strikers.³

Under reactionary dictatorship any strike inevitably took on a political character. Strikes bore witness to the huge potential of the working people in combating the Horthy regime. But it was hard to realise that potential given the cruel repressions and the difficulties within the labour movement. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party were actually against worker actions and inclined towards collaboration with the Horthy regime. Bourgeois parties were even less inclined to fight the reactionary dictatorship.

It was the Communist Party, driven underground, that was the only politically organised force able to oppose the Horthy regime. With the help of the Communist Union of Working Youth, Communists succeeded in establishing and maintaining their dominant position in the legal youth social democratic organisation. The Second Communist Party Congress, meeting in March 1930, adopted a programme containing specific demands that met the interests of widest sections of the working people. Those included higher real wages, state unemployment benefits, equal pay for equal work for men and women, freedom from tax for the poorest peasants and lower taxes on middle peasants, freedom of speech, the press and association for industrial and agricultural workers. The Congress adopted new Rules introducing a fresh procedure for joining the party and a new principle of internal structure—in future, grass-roots organisations would unite members at their workplace, not their place of residence as previously. The Foreign Bureau and underground Central Committee within the country would be in charge of the party's organisational work, and were closely to coordinate their actions.⁴

¹ *A History of Hungary*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1972, p. 273 (in Russian).

² *The Seventh Comintern Congress and the Fight to Set Up a Popular Front in Central and South-Eastern Europe*, p. 231.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁴ *Dokumentumok a magyar forradalmi munkásmozgalom történetéből 1929-1935*, Budapest, 1964, pp. 48-62 (henceforth *DMFMT*).

Meanwhile, the Congress resolutions brought up the question of fighting "to bring down the fascist state power of the bourgeoisie and to proclaim in its place proletarian dictatorship".¹ That narrowed the mass base of the anti-Horthy movement in so far as by no means all those in opposition were ready to support proletarian dictatorship. Orientation on working-class alliance with the poor peasants alone also artificially limited the range of allies of the working class, since accumulated experience demonstrated the possibility of winning wide sections of the peasants over to the revolutionary proletariat.

The Communist Party's left sectarian mistakes hampered the fight against the disruptive policy of the right-wing social democratic leadership in the labour and democratic movement. The Hungarian social democratic leaders were extremely anti-communist. Calling Communists "left-wing fascists", the social democratic central newspaper *Népszava* called on its readers to intensify the struggle not only against the Communist Party, but also against left Social Democrats who were in favour of an alliance with Communists.² Frequently by responding to social democratic leaders in kind, Communists essentially reduced the effectiveness of their own efforts to unite the workers. The Second Party Congress reference to forming independent red trade unions was just one example of sectarianism.

Analysing practical experience, however, the Communist Party found a way to organise the mass economic and political struggle in defence of the working people's interests and against the reactionary dictatorship. An important shift in party policy followed in the summer of 1933 when Communists changed their tactics in regard to the largest legal workers' organisations—the trade unions. By giving up attempts to set up special illegal or semi-legal red unions, the Party Central Committee put forward the slogan of joining the unions.

The Party's Central Committee appeal in December 1934 to social democratic leaders and the Trade Union Council to act together, join forces in defence of workers' interests and to stop mutual recrimination testified to the positive change in the party's political approach. Nonetheless the right-wing leadership of Hungary's Social Democratic Party turned down communist proposal.

The Seventh Comintern Congress decisions had a great deal of importance for the Hungarian labour movement's further development. In December 1935 the Comintern Executive Committee Secretariat sent Communist Party leaders a letter indicating the need to take more energetic measures to carry out Seventh Comintern Con-

¹ *History of the Hungarian Revolutionary and Labour Movement* (henceforward referred to as *HHRLM*), Vol. 2, p. 125 (in Russian).

² See *A History of Hungary*, Vol. 3, p. 264.

gress decisions. And in January 1936 the Party Central Committee sent a "Comradely Letter" to all party members and organisations, and the Communist Union of Working Youth, calling for a decisive shift in their practical work in the spirit of the Congress decisions. The letter pointed out the need to support "every party fighting for bourgeois democracy, and trend towards unification of the democratic forces in Hungary."¹

The Party Central Committee submitted its previous assessment of the Social Democrats to self-criticism, and called on Communists to seek ways of bringing the two sides together. One practical step in that direction was the confidential party letter to social democratic leaders in January 1936, once again proposing cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats. The Communists suggested combined efforts in combating Horthy government terror, for freedom of legal trade union activity, for defence of arrested revolutionaries, and against Hungary's orientation on fascist Germany and Italy.² In spite of the social democratic leadership turning down the proposals, the Communist Party did not neglect attempts from below secretly to establish joint action with Social Democrats in the unions and factories. At the end of 1935 the Communist Party managed to acquire the legal socio-political and literary magazine *Gondolat* (Thought) which acted as a nucleus around which gathered a number of intellectuals who backed the campaign against fascism and war.

Some Communist Party leaders, however, hindered the implementation of the Seventh Congress' general policy. In a reference to that in May 1936 the Comintern expressed its lack of confidence in Béla Kun and the Communist Party of Hungary leadership and decided to dissolve the Party's Central Committee.³

On Comintern instructions in June 1936, an interim Central Committee and Secretariat of the Communist Party of Hungary headed by Zoltan Santo were formed in Prague. The interim Secretariat was instructed to make sure the Comintern Congress decisions were carried out and to prepare a party conference at which a new Central Committee was to be elected. In June 1936 the interim party leadership adopted a decision on the party's general political stance, noting the following priorities: 1. Fight to defend and extend democratic rights, to promote the Popular Front movement by involving in it "all parties, organisations, groups and individuals that can be mobilised for combating reaction and fascism and for achieving

¹ *DMFMT 1929-1935*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

³ *HHRLM*, Vol. 2, p. 210.

a Hungarian democratic republic".¹ It thereby altered the party's strategy. At that stage it proclaimed the main objective of toppling fascism, and not directly establishing a proletarian dictatorship through socialist revolution. 2. Fight to preserve peace, to combat the threat of a new war being unleashed by the imperialists, including Hungarian imperialists. 3. Fight to safeguard the day-to-day interests of the working class, to improve working conditions and to provide benefits for the unemployed. 4. Fight for land reform by which the lands of big landowners would have to be transferred to the poor peasants without compensation.

Relying on the Seventh Comintern Congress decisions, Communists more and more widely began to combine proper criticism of social democratic policy with a pre-election policy at the polls for central and local government that made it possible for Communists and Social Democrats to work together. The new party policy steadily brought results. Despite the positions taken up by social democratic leaders, combined action by Communists and rank-and-file Social Democrats became more and more frequent on a Popular Front platform. Communists were elected to the ruling agencies of several trade unions.

Hungarian Communists extended ties with progressive intellectuals and developed cooperation with the anti-government opposition. In March 1937 an association of democratic forces of a Popular Front type took shape, known as the March Front; the Communist Party had a hand in its formation. A group of progressive literary figures known as "countryside investigators" played the leading role in the March Front.

An important aspect of party activity was its constant struggle against the revanchist foreign policy of the Horthy regime and its German-Italian orientation. From April 1937 the party started to publish in Prague and distribute within Hungary the illegal newspaper *Dolgozók Lapja* (Workers' Paper). The paper exposed the criminal plans of the aggressors, Horthy's reactionary home and foreign policy, and it appealed for unity of all democratic forces in the fight against fascism and war being kindled by the fascist Axis powers.

As the paper wrote in one of its issues, "The great objective for which the Communist Party of Hungary must now campaign is to repulse the fascist dictatorship and to safeguard peace, to restore working-class unity and to form a popular front fighting for a democratic Hungary."² To achieve that goal Hungarian Communists thought it necessary to involve in the Popular Front, along with

¹ DMFMT 1929-1935, pp. 61-64.

² *Dolgozók Lapja*, 1 April 1937.

the working class and poor peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the progressive intellectuals and other people opposing fascism. The idea of forming a popular front, comprised of these social forces and having such aims, gained support among the left wing of the Smallholders' Party led by István Dobi¹, amidst a number of left-wing officials of the Social Democratic Party, and with the National Farmers Party formed in June 1939 and advocating the interests of the poor and middle farmers.

After the Austrian *Anschluss* the threat to Hungarian independence was even greater. As a consequence, Communists amended the Popular Front policy, putting forward the slogan "Our Country Is in Danger" and calling for a campaign for national unity of democratic forces as the main bastion of the struggle against both Horthyism and the Nazi threat to Hungarian independence. The fight to preserve the nation's independence was becoming the principal orientation of the policy of Popular Front as it expanded its frameworks and was therefore turning into a real National Front, a front of national unity. In that connection the Communist Party felt it possible to involve in the national front those groups of the rural and urban bourgeoisie who were discontented with the Horthy policy of close alliance with fascist Germany—in addition to the already-mentioned classes and social strata.

Between 1938 and 1940 Horthy Hungary committed territorial raids on Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia with the connivance of Hitler Germany and fascist Italy; this tied the country even more to the chariot of aggressive German imperialism.² With such nationalist fervour raging in the country, the Communists were the only party raising its voice in protest at the annexationist actions of the Horthy regime, issuing dire warnings of the disastrous consequences of such a policy for the Hungarian people.³

The ruling groups utilised the nationalist wave sweeping the country for suppressing the revolutionary movement.

The situation deteriorated further when in September 1939 World War II began. Hungary initially took no direct part in the war, though a state of emergency was declared, police supervision was intensified and labour conscription was introduced. The slanderous anti-Soviet campaign in the bourgeois press increased, now joined by the right-wing leadership of the Social Democratic Party. Making use of the state of emergency the government launched fresh repression against Communists and left-wing forces as a result of which immense harm was done to the Communist Party.

¹ József Révai, *Marxismus, népiesség, magyarság*, Budapest, 1955, pp. 350-51.

² For more detail see *A History of Hungary*, Vol. 3, pp. 330-45.

³ *DMFMT, 1929-1935*, pp. 183-204.

In September 1940 the Comintern Executive Committee Secretariat brought in a resolution on the need to further centralise leadership of the Communist Party of Hungary so as to ensure a more precise and active guidance of work of the separately functioning communist groups and to help strengthen party activity overall.¹ The next January a permanent MKP Central Committee was formed, as were territorial party committees, in outlaw status. That put an end to the state of organisational confusion reigning in the latter part of the 1930s. In reorganising and restoring its ranks, the party was fighting for a free, independent and democratic Hungary.

The economic crisis that hit *Romania* affected the major branches of its economy. Only in the mid-1930s did the country's economy start to claw its way out of the crisis. In 1934 industrial production increased over precrisis years by almost 50 per cent. State-monopoly trends intensified in the postcrisis years and constituted the domestic basis for the ruling elite to move towards reaction, militarism and fascism. That spelled out the further exacerbation of economic and social contradictions.

The successive governments formed by the National Peasant Party (ruling between 1928 and 1933) under cover of a demagogic "civil and moral programme" made an extensive onslaught on the living standards of the working people. The practical consequence of that programme was a further reduction in wage levels and substantial worsening in the people's position.

Attempts by the ruling classes to seek a way out of the crisis at the expense of the working people produced much popular resistance. Already in 1929 the number of strikes, strikers and lost working days were more than double the respective indexes for 1927 and 1928. By contrast with the preceding years many strikes were accompanied by seizure of enterprises and clashes with the police and troops. Protest demonstrations of the unemployed took on a particularly broad scale. The protest movement also took such forms as political demonstrations which frequently ended in street battles between demonstrators and the police. The Lupeni miners' strike of August 1929 was one of the largest working-class manifestations during the crisis years. Led by Communists, the workers acted in a united front, demanding the return of their dismissed comrades, higher wages and the eight-hour working day. Strikers occupied a power station, paralysing the mines completely. The government-despatched troops dealt savagely with the miners. The Soviet daily *Pravda* called the Lupeni events "The Lena Massacre in Romania". The actions of the Lupeni miners were backed by the workers of Bucharest, Galati and Cluj, and railwaymen of Iași.

¹ *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, No. 2, May 1962, pp. 182-89. *DMFMT 1929-1935*, pp. 233-42.

The culmination of the workers' fight during the crisis was the communist-led struggle in February 1933 of railway workers from Grivița (Bucharest), joined by oil workers of Ploesti, miners of Cluj and textile workers of Buhuși and Iași. The strikes took place under the slogan "Long Live Workers' Solidarity". The worker actions were guided by action committees elected on the basis of united front tactics and led by prominent Communist Party figures like Gheorghiu-Dej and Pintilie. The strikers were demanding an end to sackings, higher wages and annulment of fines. In the face of mounting unity of action from strikers, the management at the Grivița railway works had to promise they would meet the demands, including recognition of the action committees.

In an attempt to crush the strike, the government resorted to emergency measures: a state of siege was declared in the largest industrial centres, revolutionary organisations were disbanded and the arrests began of strike committee members and Communists. During the night of 14-15 February 1933 some 1,600 Communists were taken in, including 13 leading party members and the strikers' Central Action Committee headed by Gheorghiu-Dej. The Communist Party of Romania (PCR) called on the working class to fight back, and in the morning of 15 February over 7,000 Grivița workers took over the workshops and, with active support from Bucharest workers, put up a heroic fight for two whole days against government forces and gendarmes storming the barricades of the striking railway workers. Hundreds of workers were killed or wounded.¹ The February 1933 battles were a memorable page in the history of the Romanian labour movement. As the PCR Programme today states, they demonstrated "growth in the revolutionary awareness and militant spirit of the working class, an increase in the party's ability to organise and lead the proletariat."

Nor did the peasants stand aside from struggle. Driven to desperation by hunger and need, they seized landowners' lands, wilfully cut down state woods and refused to pay debts and taxes. In many cases police and gendarmes were sent in to deal with peasant movements in the districts of Botoșani, Romanesc, Sibiu, Bihor and Gorj. This unrest testified that the poor peasants had become active participants in the country's revolutionary movement. In January 1933 a mass democratic peasant organisation was formed—the Plowmen's Front—invariably led by Petru Groza.

The districts of Ilfov, Dimbovița, Dolj and Hunedoara were caught up in peasant riots in 1934. The actions of Romanian and

¹ Florea Dragne, "45 de ani de la luptele petroliștilor și ceferiștilor", *Era socialista*, No. 3, 1978, p. 49.

Hungarian peasants in the Ghimeş Valley were long and stubborn. Supported by workers at local saw mills, the peasants seized and divided up landowners' lands. The government sent in troops to put down the riots.

At the end of the 1920s the fighting capacity of the underground Communist Party was considerably weakened by factional wrangling. The ECCI Secretariat adopted a resolution in August 1930 calling on Communists to take steps to cleanse party ranks of the in-fighting.¹ That helped to repair the damage. In December 1931 the PCR held its Fifth Congress which analysed the situation in the party, restored its unity and outlined prospects for struggle. A Congress resolution stated that Romania was confronted by the task to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution which would lead as a matter of course to a revolutionary-democratic proletarian and peasant dictatorship. Basing itself on this major premise, the Congress recognised the need to win over to the proletariat the main strata of working people in town and country and, above all, to unite the ranks of the working class by consistently implementing united front tactics from below. The Congress recommended using new forms of party organisational activity: setting up action committees, strike committees, anti-fascist committees and self-defence units to protect worker demonstrations and strikes, turning those organisations into political organs of struggle for unity of the working class and the country's democratic forces, and against the intensified policy of exploitation and terror.²

During 1934 and 1935 the PCR fought for unity of the trade union movement within the framework of the General Confederation of Labour. Those efforts were crowned with success: before its disbandment in 1938, the Confederation had, according to official figures, over 80,000 members in 13 union associations.³ The Communist Party endeavoured to invigorate work among the peasants with the help of and through the Plowmen's Front.

The party exerted considerable effort to form mass democratic organisations; on communist initiative the National Anti-Fascist Committee, Labour League and Friends of the USSR Society were all set up. However, it was not long before the government put a stop to their activity.

The Democratic Coalition, established on communist initiative in May 1935, was the most influential democratic organisation of working people in those years. Its committees were formed in all

¹ *DI PCR, 1929-1933*, Vol. 3, Bucharest, 1955, pp. 79-92; *Intrebări și răspunsuri pe teme din istoria PCR și a mișcării muncitorești din România*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 135.

² *DI PCR, 1929-1933*, p. 281.

³ *Anuarul statistic al României 1939 și 1940*, Bucharest, 1940, p. 698.

the major cities, and its Chairman was Professor Petre Constantinescu-Iași, a Communist and eminent figure in the anti-fascist movement. After it had been banned, the Coalition's activity and traditions were continued by civil committees which took upon themselves the functions of supervision of public order in the towns and, in a number of cases, successfully warded off terrorist attacks by fascist bands.

Several organisations of aid to political prisoners and their defence—the Red Aid, Action Committee to Free Anti-Fascists, etc.—operated in the 1930s under communist leadership. Their members included well-known personalities from science and culture and progressive politicians.¹

Over 20 mass democratic, cultural, youth, women's and sports societies came into existence and operated actively between 1933 and 1938 under communist party leadership; they paid much attention to the needs and interests of the working people, enabling the party more closely to link up with the people and to promote an overall upsurge in the anti-imperialist, anti-fascist struggle in the country.²

The PCR did a great deal of work in uniting forces opposing fascism and the threat of war into a united popular front after the Seventh Comintern Congress. On communist initiative agreements were signed in November and December 1935 on concerted action by a number of democratic, anti-fascist organisations (the Democratic Coalition, the Plowmen's Front, MADOS and the left socialist group), which marked the beginning of a united democratic front.³ Joint action helped Romania's democratic forces to triumph at the partial parliamentary elections in the districts of Hunedoara and Mehedinți in February 1936.

The Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the PCR Central Committee which met in August 1936 appealed for unity of all democratic forces around the proletariat as the most steadfast champion of the fight against fascism and war, and put forward the "Platform of Popular Anti-Fascist Front Struggle for Peace, Land and Freedom".⁴

The PCR's work to unite anti-fascist forces ran into problems because of the lack of labour movement unity, the negative reaction of social democratic leaders to the idea of a popular front, and the

¹ Gh. I. Ioniță, *Pentru front popular antifascist în România*, Bucharest, 1971, p. 89.

² *Probleme fundamentale ale istoriei patriei și a Partidului Comunist Român*, Bucharest, 1977, p. 182.

³ See A. A. Yazkova, *Romania on the Eve of World War II*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 113-14 (in Russian); Gh. I. Ioniță, *Pentru front popular antifascist în România*, pp. 143-44.

⁴ *DI PCR, 1934-1937*, Vol. 4, Bucharest, 1957, pp. 412-63.

Communist Party's frailty in organisation.¹ Unity of democratic forces also came up against the problem of many peasants being under the influence of national-peasant ideology.

Despite all the difficulties and government repression, the ranks of the anti-fascist movement were more and more vigorously involving progressive forces. Anti-fascist articles and reports by progressive journalists, many of whom became Communists at that time, were regularly appearing in democratic newspapers and magazines. In early 1937 Romania's leading writer Mihail Sadoveanu spoke up in defence of Republican Spain and the Popular Front. The best representatives of Romania's anti-fascist movement were fighting at the battle fronts of Republican Spain, and committees of aid to Spanish anti-fascists were active in Romania.

In the latter part of 1937 reactionary trends in the country's political life particularly intensified. The country's ruling groups came out in open alliance with the fascist states. Internal reaction moved into the attack. In December 1937 Carol II formed a non-party government responsible to him personally, which meant the establishment of his dictatorship. He revoked the 1923 Constitution, outlawed political parties and, then, the trade unions, replacing them with so-called corporations on the model of fascist Italy. The death penalty was introduced for "crimes against state security". In December 1938 a single political party of the fascist type was formed—the National Renaissance Front, thereby paving the way for a fascist regime.

The new regime brought with it a substantial downturn in the fortunes of the working people. The work day was everywhere increased to 12-14 hours or more. A law was passed on "agrarian mobilisation" which gave the authorities the right to send peasants to compulsory work on landowners' farms.

The Communist Party was the only party in the country to appeal to the working people, all progressive, democratic forces to fight to overthrow the monarchist-fascist dictatorship. In April 1938, the PCR called on the population and on all dissolved political parties and organisations, reiterating the vital need to form a wide popular front for fighting to restore the constitutional parliamentary system, civil rights and liberties.²

In striving to unite the actions of the working class and to guarantee conditions for cooperation with other political forces, the PCR made strenuous efforts to reach agreement with the leadership of the Social Democratic Party. But SDP right leaders took the road

¹ Emilia Sonea, Gavrilă Sonea, *Vișta economică și politică a României 1933-1938*, Bucharest, 1978, p. 236; Gh. I. Ioniță, *PCR și masele populare (1934-1938)*, Bucharest, 1971, p. 168.

² *Scînteia*, 1 April 1938.

of open collaboration with the royal dictatorship, and some occupied high posts in the state apparatus and the governing party. By its support for the Carol dictatorship, the Social Democratic Party of Romania largely discredited itself in the eyes of workers and union members.

The worsening economic situation caused an upsurge in the struggle by Romanian working people. Despite the toughening political conditions, more than 200 labour conflicts occurred in 1938, of which some 80 were big strikes.¹ In defence of their interests and rights, metal-workers of Cluj, Iași railway workers, and footwear workers of Bucharest all downed tools. Their actions were backed up by peasants in the districts of Ilfov, Brașov and Prahova, demanding completion of the 1921 agrarian reform and alleviation of the tax burden.² The year 1939 was again marked by quite a high upsurge in the labour movement: some 70,000 people took part in strikes and labour conflicts.³

The Communist Party conducted a vigorous struggle against the capitulationist and pro-German policy of the government, calling for a patriotic front of struggle against the impending war danger and for a foreign policy in alliance with the USSR, France and Czechoslovakia. The celebration of May Day 1939 was an important event in the history of the labour and anti-fascist movement, when worker demonstrations took place in Bucharest and other large towns against the policy of national treachery that the ruling groups of the Carol dictatorship were pursuing, against the expansion of fascist Germany. Using experience of struggle for the anti-fascist popular front, the Communist Party of Romania continued tirelessly to fight to unite all democratic and patriotic forces.

In *Yugoslavia* the economic crisis commenced later than in other countries, but its ruinous consequences were felt much longer. The crisis revealed all the paramount contradictions in the prevailing socio-economic system. Yugoslavia continued to remain an agrarian country with undeveloped industry and an archaic farming system. Low wages, agrarian overpopulation and vast hidden unemployment had not stimulated technical progress in either agriculture or industry.

The pauper status of the working people was intensified by the terrible political tyranny of the reactionary monarchist regime. In such circumstances every economic act by workers turned into an extremely bitter battle. From 1931 organised actions by the working

¹ *Anuarul statistic al României 1939 și 1940*, pp. 324, 329.

² *Scinteia*, 24 January 1939; Al. Gh. Savu, *Dictatura regală (1938-1940)*, Bucharest, 1970, p. 264.

³ *Intrebări și răspunsuri pe teme din istoria Partidului Comunist Român...* p. 367; Al. Gh. Savu, *Dictatura regală*, p. 367.

class against wage cuts, the longer work day and falling employment became increasingly frequent. The railway workers in Zagreb went on strike; in Bosnia saw mill workers protesting at mass sackings tried to take over the mills. In 1932 strikes flared up again in Serbia, Bosnia and Dalmatia. From year to year the activity of the working class and its militant spirit grew.

In a country like Yugoslavia what was decisive for workers' success in struggle was linking it to that of the peasants. That is why it was of immense importance that from the latter part of 1933, the striking workers were joined by the starving, land-hungry peasants and farm labourers. The working people together organised political demonstrations under the slogan "Bread and Work". In 1934 the whole country was agitated by large-scale strikes of miners in Trbovlje (Slovenia) and workers at the cement works in Dalmatia. The working-class struggle was increasingly combining with turbulent political demonstrations by students and mass peasant unrest.

The years 1934-1935 provided real proof that the various social forces opposing the dictatorship had practically begun to join forces: strikes of industrial workers occurred simultaneously with peasant unrest and actions by progressive intellectuals and students. The working class was preparing to enter the political arena as the leading force.

The next year became one of mass strike action, the greatest since 1920. Strikes swept both individual enterprises and whole branches of industry (builders strikes in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, and strikes at 57 textile mills in Slovenia). In 1937 a mass movement of working people developed under communist leadership against attempts by the authorities to ban the right to strike. In a year there were more than 200 strikes in many branches of production. They took place this time not only in the large centres, but in quite sparsely-populated areas. The working class had staved off attacks by the regime on its rights inscribed in collective agreements.

Some 200 strikes took place in 1938 many of which were particularly stubborn (like the two-month stoppage of construction workers in Split). That April supporters of trade union unity had a resounding victory at the Congress of the United Labour Union of Trade Unions, which defeated the right-wing Social Democrats who had been pursuing a divisive, anti-communist policy backed by the authorities.

Cells of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia were formed at many factories and in workshops and workers' quarters of towns. They established contact with the agricultural proletariat, the poor peasants, and drew progressive intellectuals into the revolutionary movement. As the main organiser and leader of the popular struggle, Communists played a decisive part in uniting the most diverse protest movements into a single revolutionary stream.

The policy of alliance between the working class and the peasants was the party's general policy; a leading party member F. Filipovic prophetically wrote: "The entire present-day situation in Yugoslavia is driving the poor peasants through iron need to joint struggle with the working class against the fascist bourgeois-landowner dictatorship."¹

Decisions of the Fourth Party Conference held in December 1934 were of fundamental importance; they envisaged the formation of the communist parties of Slovenia and Croatia within the single Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and, as a resolution stated, a Communist Party of Macedonia in the near future. Those decisions were part of a number of measures that ensured the practical implementation of the Party Programme on the national question and took into consideration the specific situation in various parts of the state, putting forward specific forms of struggle and different approaches to tackling general party tasks.

As a result of communist activity among the mass of peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie a new conception of paths to liberation began to take shape: the people more and more linked the struggle for equal rights for all nations in the country with that for social emancipation and democratic change.

Efforts to fulfil the Seventh Comintern Congress decisions to form a broad popular front for combating fascism and reaction, for uniting the working class, gradually led to a strengthening and resurgence of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

The impact of Communists on political affairs was constantly growing, and the valiant efforts of their party prepared the ground for forming a broad anti-fascist front.²

The Party Central Committee Plenum in January 1937 adopted a special resolution stating, "The Party must become a real factor in Yugoslavia's foreign policy. It must show all the nationalities of Yugoslavia, particularly the oppressed peoples, that Hitler fascism is fatal for them, it would bring them servitude, plunder and destruction. One of the party's paramount tasks is to organise a powerful anti-Hitler movement in Yugoslavia, a nationwide struggle against Nazi policy and the government, concretely to expose that policy and the plans of Nazi agents."³

The party called on all non-fascist parties to get together and achieve concerted action against the danger hanging over the country's independence and sovereignty, to form a democratic alliance

¹ B. Boskovic, "For Leading the Peasant Movement in Yugoslavia", *Agrarniye problemy*, No. 7, 1932, p. 28 (in Russian).

² See M. M. Sumarokova, *The Democratic Forces of Yugoslavia in the Struggle Against Reaction and the Threat of War, 1929-1939*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

³ *Pregled istorije Saveza komunista Jugoslavije*, p. 249.

for resisting the reactionary dictatorship. Bourgeois parties responded by rejecting all the Communist Party's proposals. But many officials in parties opposed to the government, and rank-and-file members of those parties made contact with communist organisations, helped to extend the movement to set up a popular front. Left-wingers in several bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and groups frequently took part along with Communists in organising mass action.

A new party leadership took over in the spring of 1938, headed by Josip Broz Tito; the new leadership launched an unremitting campaign against factions in the party, and worked to strengthen the party organisationally and ideologically.

As the danger of world war mounted, the party began to pay more and more attention to exposing the plans of international imperialism against the working class of all countries, plans for anti-Soviet intervention and the aggressive plots by fascism in regard to Yugoslavia. In March 1937 the party organised mass protest demonstrations over the visit of Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister. Many thousands of workers and students demonstrated in Belgrade on 14 December 1939 under the communist-advanced slogan "For Peace, Bread and Freedom"; the demonstration was headed by Communists. The government ordered police to open fire and three students and one worker were killed, and several dozens were wounded.¹

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia pointed out that the monarchists and exploiting clique at the top were tying the country's destiny to the most reactionary imperialist forces. In a situation of unceasing persecution from the reactionary regime the party took decisive measures to consolidate its ranks, to unite its organisations, to tighten up discipline and to improve the ideological and political education of Communists. That was a necessary condition for preparing the working class and all working people for the coming historic trial. On the eve of World War II there was a broad and militant popular anti-fascist movement growing, and a democratic and patriotic front was in the making.

The Fifth Party Conference of October 1940 adopted decisions of paramount importance for further party activity. It took a resolute position on questions of unity and equal rights of all nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia, it indicated the danger of fascist aggression and it took the necessary decisions on all the main problems of party work and affairs. The Conference which was on the level of a party congress in terms of the issues it discussed and the

¹ "Naš put. Pola veka revolucionarne borbe Saveza komunista Jugoslavije". *Komunist*, Belgrade, 1969, pp. 368-69.

decisions it took, showed that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had largely overcome its internal difficulties and was now capable of properly playing the part of the organiser and leader of the working class.

That was confirmed during the March events of 1941. On 25 March 1941 the pro-fascist government of Cvetkovic-Macek adhered to the tripartite pact of the Axis powers (Germany-Japan-Italy), and on 26-27 March the party organised impressive anti-fascist protest demonstrations; as a result, the "national betrayal" government was overthrown. The new government signed the pact on friendship and non-aggression with the USSR on 5 April.

The 1929-1933 world economic crisis deeply affected the economy of *Greece*. Its effect on the country's economy was catastrophic because of its strong dependence on foreign capital and its status in the world capitalist system as a supplier of farm produce and industrial raw materials. On 1 May 1932 the government even had to declare the country bankrupt. The Greek bourgeoisie tried to transfer the burden of the crisis on to the working people. Throughout the country employers infringed the eight-hour work day law: at many factories the work day was extended to 10-11 hours, and at some even to 12-13 hours. Work became more intensive, unemployment reached vast dimensions and one-third of the proletariat found itself unemployed.

The economic crisis was exceptionally taxing on the peasants who made up 67 per cent of the population. As much as two-thirds of peasant income went on paying off debts and taxes; such an unbearable burden led to impoverishment and destitution for many farmers. The middle urban strata also suffered greatly.

With the beginning of the economic crisis a new revolutionary upsurge developed. In 1929 mass strikes of workers took place in Athens and Salonika, tobacco workers in Agrinion and Laurion miners demonstrated, and an unemployed march occurred in the island of Thasos. Workers were demanding an eight-hour work day, measures on social security, unemployment benefits and trade union liberties. In 1930 the shoemakers of Larissa and the construction workers of Corinth went on strike. As many as 40,000 peasants took part in a protest demonstration against taxes, clashing with gendarmes. Between 1931 and 1932 the footwear workers of Athens, Piraeus and Kalamata, the dockers of Piraeus and the tobacco workers of Salonika, Volos and Patras went on strike. Many thousands of peasants took part in the "hunger marches to the towns" as well as in actions against money-lenders and arbitrary actions by landowners.

The year 1932 saw some 200 strikes involving 80,000 people; 1933 saw 470 strikes involving over 100,000 blue and white collar workers. The number of strikers in 1934 reached 184,000 while in 1935 it

was 220,000. It was the Communist Party of Greece that organised and led the mass strike movement.

In the new complex domestic situation the party was faced with the acute problem of working out a clear-cut strategy and tactics around which Communists and all the country's democratic forces could unite. That policy was worked out at the Sixth Central Committee Plenum in January 1934 with the direct assistance of the Comintern. On the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis the Plenum decided that the future revolution in Greece would be bourgeois-democratic, with a tendency towards a rapid transformation into socialist revolution.¹ The Fifth Party Congress in March 1934 noted that "fascism and war are becoming a more and more perceptible menace with every passing day", and it pinpointed the central "decisive task of the moment ... to mobilise the working people so as to block the establishment of a fascist dictatorship."²

Guided by Fifth Congress decisions, the party initiated a policy of anti-fascist unity of all national forces and organised the fight against fascism. A great achievement in that direction was the calling on 5 July 1934 of the first Greek anti-fascist conference and the signing on 5 October of a pact on concerted action by representatives of the Communist Party, the agrarian, socialist and social democratic workers' parties, as well as the three trade union organisations—the Greek General Confederation of Labour, the Greek Unitarian General Confederation of Labour and Independent Unions. The joint appeal of the Communist Party, the agrarian and socialist parties in November 1934 to workers to join forces against reactionary designs led to the foiling of fascist action planned for 4 February 1935.

Decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress were of exceptional importance for the Greek revolutionary movement. Relying on those decisions, the Fourth Party Plenum of September 1935 set Communists the task of campaigning for a united anti-fascist front. The Plenum announced also that the Communist Party was ready, in the fight against Italian and German fascist aggression, to work with all organisations and parties which would genuinely safeguard national integrity and independence. The Plenum drew attention to the mounting threat of fascism and of restoration of the monarchy in Greece, pointing out that "the party is today working in defence of bourgeois democracy and against fascism... for the people's democratic rights and freedom attained in many years of struggle."³

Talks, started at the initiative of the party, with leaders of bour-

¹ *Neos kosmos*, No. 9, 1968, p. 15 (in Greek).

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ *Forty Years of the Communist Party of Greece, 1918-1958. Collected Documents*, p. 412 (in Greek).

geois-democratic parties ended on 9 October 1935 with an agreement on the formation of a countrywide alliance for joint action against the threat of fascism. The Sixth Party Congress of December 1935 ratified the Plenum decisions and underlined the need to form a united anti-war front.

The development of events in Greece confirmed the veracity of the communist call for a united rebuff to reactionary designs. On 10 October 1935 the forces of reaction carried out a government coup with vigorous backing from British imperialism. Putschists from the Military Union overthrew the Tsaldaris government and summoned parliament which adopted a resolution on holding a plebiscite and on the provisional restoration of the monarchist constitution of 1911. The rift in the democratic forces helped the monarchists to triumph in the plebiscite. And on 25 November 1935 King George II returned to Greece.

But the monarchist victory did not yet mean that the outcome of the battle between the forces of reaction and democracy had finally been sealed. On 19 February 1936 the Communist Party signed an agreement on joint action with the Liberal Party, and then in July with the Agrarian Party of Sophanopoulos, which envisaged stepping up the fight to avert the danger of a fascist regime being set up, for satisfying the people's main democratic demands. The decision to unite the three independent trade union confederations into a single Greek General Confederation of Labour, adopted in the same month, was of tremendous importance.

In 1936 the country witnessed a broad anti-fascist movement and an intensified strike struggle. The supreme manifestation of that were the mass strikes and protest meetings of 9 and 10 May in Salonika which were brutally fired upon by the police. A huge wave of popular political action against such establishment lawlessness swept the country the following days.

The growing revolutionary upsurge and the government's inability to control the situation caused serious alarm among the Greek oligarchy and its foreign patrons. On 4 August 1936 General Joannes Metaxas who was then Prime Minister carried out a military coup and inflicted a fascist-type dictatorship upon the Greek people. A state of emergency was introduced, parliament was dissolved and the most stringent censorship established. The decree "On Measures for Combating Communism and Its Consequences" was issued on 16 September; on that basis the Communist Party was outlawed, as were other political parties and democratic organisations. Trade unions came under state control. Mass arrests of all enemies of dictatorship now began, and thousands of party activists and other anti-fascists were thrown into gaol or despatched to barren islands.

Despite the terror, the shadowing and harsh persecution the Greek

people did not reconcile themselves to the dictatorship. The Communist Party conducted an implacable struggle against the dictatorship. On 25 December 1936, from deep hiding the party called on all the country's progressives to unite and coordinate action in a fight to bring down the anti-popular, anti-national dictatorship, and to save Greece from irreparable harm. Communists were among the organisers of and active participants in the anti-fascist demonstrations of the spring of 1937 at Propileus, in an Athenian stadium and on Mount Parnassus. The party played an important part in the very large action by anti-fascist forces—the popular uprising against the dictatorship at Canea on Crete in July 1938. Yet leaders of the liberal parties succeeded in splitting the Revolutionary Committee by refusing to countenance Communist Party proposals on spreading the uprising to the rest of the island, they did not want to rely on the common people, and from the very start of the uprising they entered into talks with representatives of the royal government and Britain so as to reach a compromise. All that spelled disaster for the uprising.

After the Crete insurrection the bourgeois parties almost completely halted resistance to the dictatorship. Only the Communist Party, in spite of heavy losses, continued the struggle against monarchist fascism and for unity of anti-dictatorship forces. As the resolution of the February 1939 Fifth Plenum of the Party Central Committee stated, "Our Party sees its prime task in uniting all political and popular-military anti-dictatorship forces in the country for coordinated resolute mass struggle to overthrow the dictatorship and to form an anti-dictatorship government."¹ The party showed itself to be an implacable fighter against fascism, the most consistent anti-fascist force, making the biggest contribution to establishing conditions for a powerful anti-fascist movement in wartime.

The situation in *Albania* during the world economic crisis was extremely tense. The crisis and a harvest failure led to a sharp fall in exports of farm produce which was the country's main export item. Small businessmen and artisans went bankrupt and the army of jobless swelled; starvation hit several areas of the country, and unrest permeated every stratum of society.

The first Albanian communist group was set up by political émigrés in Moscow in August 1928 with Comintern aid, and help from the Balkan Communist Federation and Georgi Dimitrov personally. In a note to the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee of 12 September 1928 Dimitrov proposed an extensive plan of work in setting up a communist party inside Albania. It was

¹ *Forty Years of the Communist Party of Greece, 1918-1958. Collected Documents*, p. 459.

then that the first group inside the country, at the town of Korçës, came into being.

Adoption by Albanian Communists of popular anti-imperialist front tactics¹ in combination with the objective trends in the mounting mass movement against King Zogu's dictatorship encouraged a growth of awareness and organised struggle. That was apparent during the uprising in Fieri in 1935. The clandestine organisation in charge of preparations for the uprising united people of diverse political views. Communists worked with it, possessing their own programme of national reconstruction in the event of the uprising's success—namely a people's democratic republic, annulment of all servile agreements with fascist Italy, elimination of monopolies and concessions, and an amnesty for political prisoners.²

The uprising began on 10 August 1935 and was soon put down. All the same, as noted at the session of the Balkan Section of the Comintern in December 1936, the uprising was a successful attempt to organise a national front of struggle against reaction. On the whole, in the late 1930s there was a marked increase in the activity of communist groups. The Korçës communist group strengthened and extended its influence among the working people and, in 1934, a communist group in Shkodra appeared. Besides the two main groups there were other, smaller organisations that called themselves communist, although essentially they were not.

Attempts to achieve unity of action among the groups on a fundamental Marxist-Leninist basis after 1937 did not bring much success, and that weakened the Albanian labour and democratic movement. Albania's occupation by fascist Italy on 7 April 1939 exacerbated contradictions within Albanian society and presented a new problem—that of fighting to restore independence.

WORKER ACTIONS IN WESTERN AND NORTHERN EUROPE

The economy of *Britain* suffered less from the 1929-1933 crisis than did that of the USA or Germany, although the outlook for British workers throughout the 1930s remained extremely grim. The vast army of unemployed amounting to over 3 million was essentially thrown back on its own resources, since the prevailing unemployment benefit system did not cover even the slightest fraction of its material requirements. Pauperisation and inhuman forms of exploitation became common events in Great Britain.

¹ See N. D. Smirnov, "Uprising in Fieri in 1935", in the book *Balkan Research*, Issue 3: *Liberation Movements in the Balkans*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 153-54 (in Russian).

² *Historia e Shqipërisë*, Vol. 2, Tirana, 1965, p. 615.

Aware of the difficult economic situation and mounting popular discontent, the ruling groups were not ill-disposed to the second Labour government headed by Ramsay MacDonald in the summer of 1929. They calculated that a "Labour" government would restrain working people's protests more effectively than any bourgeois party could. What is more, bourgeois politicians reckoned that any policy of "economies" at the expense of the common people would invariably undermine confidence in the Labour Party, engender disillusionment among workers and once again push them into the arms of the Conservatives.

Labour government policy was not to disappoint them. In July 1931 the government-created economy committee proposed reducing state expenditure in the 1932/33 budget by £120 million by cutting unemployments benefits, wages and public works. MacDonald's anti-worker policy provoked much anger among workers. The TUC General Council and the Labour Party Executive Committee had to speak out against the government economy plan. MacDonald and several of his cronies who refused to accept that decision were expelled from the Labour Party and the government had to resign. The newly-formed National Government headed by MacDonald relied on the backing of the Tories, Liberals and 13 Labour MPs.¹

Having managed to debilitate the Labour Party and made sure it was trounced at the general election, the bourgeoisie now counted on causing havoc in the mass movement as well. But it ran into stiff opposition from the working class which was so stubborn that even the bourgeois press was talking of a return to the Chartist era. Strikes in the textile and coal industries, and the naval mutiny at Invergordon between 15 and 17 September 1931 testified that the 1926 traditions lived on. The Hunger March of unemployed on London between January and February 1934 was a paramount event that left its mark on the whole development of the labour movement. By the time it reached the capital a National Congress of Unity and Action against hunger, fascism and war was held on 24-25 February 1934.² The hundred thousand-strong demonstration of London workers on Sunday, 25 February 1934 in support of the unemployed's demands and the mass protest demonstrations throughout Britain in early 1935 forced the government to halt the reactionary act on insurance that gravely threatened workers' interests. The Communist Party played the role of initiator and organiser in those events. It was thanks to its efforts within the

¹ See Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism. A Study in the Politics of Labour*, London, 1961, p. 192.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 14, 2 March 1934, Vol. 14, p. 336; Allen Hutt, *The Post-War History of the British Working Class*, London, 1937, p. 253.

National Unemployed Workers' Movement that the various left-wing political groups, trade unions and cooperative societies were able to cooperate.¹

The British working class steadfastly opposed fascism. The spectacular anti-fascist demonstrations of London workers on 9 September 1934 and 4 October 1936 once again convincingly showed the determination of British working people to stop the spreading of the right-wing danger in the country.

The heightened trade union activity in defence of the workers' economic interests, the anti-war and anti-fascist action were all links in a single chain of resurgence in the militant spirit of the British labour movement. The political consequences of the new mood and upsurge in extra-parliamentary action soon made themselves felt.

From the early 1930s Labour Party policy was under fire from below. A number of large unions (the NUM and the Engineers in particular) announced their opposition to the General Council's anti-communist line and supported the notion of renewing contacts between British and Soviet trade union movements on a common platform of anti-fascist struggle and trade union unity. The left wing of the Labour Party (James Maxton, Harold Laski, Stafford Cripps, D. N. Pritt, Michael Food, and others) insisted on a review of the party's programme documents, and the stronger voicing within them of anti-capitalist slogans.

After the MacDonald group's expulsion from the party, the Labour Party Executive Committee appointed a political committee to prepare a "completely new policy". In 1932 the party leadership solemnly declared that it was setting itself the task of forming a "mighty force of Socialist faith".² That promise, however, was not backed up by practical deeds,³ which was just one of the reasons for the Independent Labour Party (ILP) to break with the party and its policy of class collaboration; the ILP expressed its desire to take a "fresh revolutionary path". The ILP announced its attachment to the Comintern as a sympathiser organisation.⁴ Within the Labour Party the Socialist League led by Stafford Cripps continued to operate; it was well-disposed to the Communist Party's idea of unity of all

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 19, 23 March 1934, Vol. 14, pp. 490-91.

² See Ralph Miliband, *op. cit.*, p. 230; I.N. Undasynov, *The Labour Movement and the British Labour Party During the World Economic Crisis*, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian).

³ See V. A. Ryzhikov, "Socialism" *Labour-Style: Myths and Reality*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 80-90 (in Russian).

⁴ See *The Communist Party of Great Britain in the Struggle for the People's Masses and a United Proletarian Front*, Moscow, 1935, p. 52 (in Russian).

left forces in the fight against fascism and the threat of war,¹ and opposed trade unionist dominance within the Labour Party.

Step by step British Communists succeeded in extending their contacts with grass-roots organisations of the Labour Party and the trade unions. They did a great deal also in popularising Marxist ideas.² On 17 March 1933 the ILP and the Communist Party reached agreement on immediately combining forces in mobilising the working class for combating fascism and the threat of war. Harry Pollitt and William Gallacher on behalf of the Communist Party, and James Maxton and Fenner Brockway on behalf of the ILP signed a joint appeal from both parties to the British working class for intensifying all forms of struggle against capital.³

Many years of effort to reach such agreement on joint action with the Labour Party had been fruitless owing to resistance from its leaders. But in endeavouring to show that the Labour Party was in touch with the times, its leaders began to revise certain points in its programme. So the Labour Party pre-election manifesto in 1935 included demands to nationalise the banks, key branches of industry and the land. And although, through passive tactics, the Labour Party was unable to defeat the Conservatives at the 1935 general election, it did gain two million more votes than it had done in 1931. For the first time a Communist, William Gallacher, entered Parliament for the constituency of West Fife (Scotland).

The latter part of the 1930s was marked by several large-scale actions by British workers. In November 1936 there was the big Hunger March of unemployed. In late 1936 the ILP and the Communist Party began negotiations with the Socialist League on joint action and, in the following January, a Unity Manifesto was issued which outlined a broad programme for fighting capitalist exploitation and war, and for safeguarding peace. The mood hardened within the working class for concerted resolute action against the National Government's entire home and foreign policy.⁴ The unity campaign between 1938 and 1939 was reflected in united action by all democrats and progressives; the logical conclusion of this campaign could have led to the formation of a popular front and Chamberlain's removal from office along with his whole Cabinet. It was only the divisive policy of right-wing Labour leaders that prevented consolidation of

¹ Patricia Strauss, *Cripps. Advocate Extraordinary*, New York, 1942.

² It was then that British Communists managed to acquire a house in which Marx had once lived in London and founded Marx House which became a centre for studying social issues.

³ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 2, 12 January 1935, Vol. 15, p. 48.

⁴ Specifically, the Labour Party, bearing responsibility for the policy of encouraging German revanchism pursued by the British government throughout the 1920s and 1930s, was forced publicly to condemn Britain's forthcoming participation in the Munich sell-out.

popular opposition fighting to turn Britain away from the suicidal policy of anti-Sovietism and pandering to fascist aggression.¹ That gave a free hand to the "appeasers" who were doing all they could to prevent the formation of a peace front—the only force that could stand in the way of fascist aggression.

The Communist Party saw clearly the source of deadly danger and sought to unite all the nation's healthy forces on a platform of active anti-fascism. It firmly believed that the salient condition of a radical regrouping of the country's social forces in favour of genuine peace and democracy was to bring the labour movement out of its isolation, to overcome the disorder within it and to get it decisively to intervene in all spheres of national policy.

In *Belgium* the consequences of world economic crisis caused destabilisation of economic affairs: coal stocks fell, virtually a third of all iron and steel plants closed down, and glass and textile enterprises worked well below capacity. By 1932 industrial production was 37 per cent of the 1929 level, the state budget shortfall more than doubled, and exports sharply fell. Thousands of Belgians were redundant.

The ruling classes began an offensive upon the working people's social and democratic rights. In December 1932 the government succeeded in passing an "extraordinary powers" law by which new taxes and substantial cuts in expenditure on social needs were introduced. Those measures worsened the already harsh conditions of the unemployed, old-age pensioners and invalids.

The ruling groups' policy provoked rising discontent among the working people. Office workers, farmers and the unemployed joined industrial workers in the strike movement. In July 1932 over 220,000 miners, iron and steel workers and men and women in other industries came out on strike in Beauraing. In many districts the strikers put on mass demonstrations, prevented strikebreakers from passing the picket lines, set up barricades and clashed in open battles with the gendarmes and troops sent in to crush the strike. Unemployed protest marches and hunger marches became a new form of class actions.

Meanwhile the labour movement remained divided. The right-wing leaders of the Belgian Workers' Party (POB) and the Catholic Party leadership were against united mass action by Belgian working people. Concerted action also floundered on the activity of Flemish Nationalists. In 1931 the extremist Ferdinasso group was formed, followed two years later by the Flemish National Union advocating the autonomy of Flanders within a federal Belgium.

Belgian Communists vigorously fought for unity in worker ac-

¹ See Harry Pollitt, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Vol. 2, London, pp. 100-14.

tions. By 1930 the Communist Party of Belgium (PCB) had overcome an internal crisis caused by the erroneous policy of party leaders towards work within the unions. The accusation of "trade union legalism" was removed from such dedicated champions of proletarian interests as Julien Lahaut and Joseph Jacquemotte, and in 1931 the latter was restored to a place among the party leadership at the PCB Congress known as the unity congress.

The Belgian Workers' Party also experienced a certain evolution. During the crisis years the futility of the reformist leadership's policy was patently obvious: while seeking to preserve "class peace" its leaders had tried to win an electoral majority and take up a dominant position in the country's political affairs. But discontent with the PCB's political course rose sharply among party members. The most active critics of the official line were the "neo-Socialists" led by Hendrik de Man who was proposing a review of the whole basis of the party's ideological and political activity. De Man put forward a Five-Year Plan of Painless Socialisation of the Country (The Work Plan) designed to rescue the country from the economic crisis by "economic transformation based on nationalisation" within the capitalist economy. The Work Plan was approved and adopted as a new political party policy at the Workers' Party Congress in late 1933.¹

After Socialists had joined the "national unification" government of the Catholic Paul van Zeeland in 1935, they refused to carry out social reforms in the working people's interests. Once it gained parliament's permission for extraordinary powers, the van Zeeland Cabinet devalued the Belgian franc and passed a series of anti-labour laws establishing a "regime of austerity and economies".

By the start of 1936 the internal political situation had become considerably worse: mass discontent with government policy was now augmented by mounting national strife as well as actions by pro-fascist associations and organisations.

The Rexist Party (*les rexistes*) led by Léon Degrelle now entered the Walloon political fray. Combining ideas of nationalism and totalitarianism in their programme, the rexists enflamed anti-Flemish sentiments, advocated a "strong royal authority and order", and attacked democratic institutions and labour organisations. In October 1936 the Rexist Party attempted a coup d'état, but failed as a result of staunch action by the Belgian working class, especially Socialists and Communists.

A mass miners' strike commenced in June 1936, demonstrating the capacity of the Belgian working class for concerted action: some half a million workers—Socialists, Communists, Catholics and

¹ H. de Man, *Le Plan du Travail*, Paris-Brussels, 1934, p. 17.

Liberals—fought together shoulder to shoulder in the strike. Under the impact of the class actions of the Belgian proletariat and the victory of the Popular Front in France a number of progressive social reforms were pushed through.

In the gathering circumstances, the question of joint action by the working class became central within the labour movement. At the Communist Party Conference of 1935 the old leadership came under withering criticism for sectarian mistakes. Joseph Jacquemotte was elected General Secretary of the new PCB Central Committee, and the new leadership began vigorously to pursue a policy of uniting the entire working class and democratic forces to combat fascism. The movement for unity by various sections of the labour movement gained new impetus. In the summer of 1936 the Socialist Young Guard and Communist Youth organisations came together into the United Young Socialist Guard. And in autumn that year Popular Front committees came into being in many industrial centres; they were made up of Communists, Socialists, Catholics and representatives of various worker and democratic organisations. Local federations of the communist and workers' parties in Brussels and Liege concluded a pact on concerted action and successfully held a number of joint anti-fascist meetings and demonstrations.

Heightened work among the people contributed to communist success at the polls. Thus, in the May 1936 parliamentary election, Communists campaigning under the slogan of strengthening unity in combating fascism and war, gained nine seats—i.e., three times more than they had done at the 1932 election. Belgian Communists organised several demonstrations and protest meetings against Italian aggression in Abyssinia, and some 2,000 Belgian Communists, Socialists and petty-bourgeois democrats fought in the International Brigades of Spain.

For the first time in Belgian history, a Socialist, Paul Henri Spaak, headed a coalition government in May 1938; on the eve of his election he had frankly stated: "I am no longer a Socialist. The class struggle and Marxism are old outmoded theories which have no meaning today."

At the 1939 election the Socialists ended up with only 64 M. P.s. — the lowest figure in all interwar history; the election showed that discontent with the policy of class collaboration pursued by leaders of the Workers' Party had acquired a mass character.

In the *Netherlands* the world economic crisis came to a head in 1930. Being heavily dependent on supplies of raw materials, on international economic and financial ties, the Dutch economy entered on a long drawn-out crisis that lasted until 1936. Whole industries operating on colonial raw materials ground to a halt. By contrast with 1929, industrial output fell by more than 33 per cent, and exports by 64 per

cent in 1932. Shipbuilding declined by eight times in that period, and overall unemployment reached staggering levels: almost every third worker was jobless in 1932.

The government policy of "economies" at the working people's expense, inflation and tax rises led to mounting unrest in the labour movement. In 1931, in response to a 30 per cent cut in wages to textile workers there began a general strike in the country's textile centre—Twente. Strikes and demonstrations of solidarity with the strikers took place up and down the country. In 1932 a big strike of workers began in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Groningen. Dutch Communists played an energetic part during the strike. The biggest farm workers' strike in the country's history, lasting five and a half months, took place in the province of Groningen. The whole country witnessed manifestations by the unemployed who arranged meetings and demonstrations, as well as protest marches.

The mutiny in the Dutch Navy in Indonesia that broke out in February 1933 was a very important revolutionary event in the prewar decade. Punitive measures were taken against the mutineers: some 300 sailors were gaoled. When the news of that reached crews of other naval ships, sailors of the battleship *De Zeven Provinciën* arrested their officers and hoisted the red flag. The mutineers set sail for Surabaya where their comrades-in-arms were languishing in gaol. On the fifth day of its voyage the ship came under air attack and, after the death of more than 20 men the crew ceased resistance. The mutiny of Dutch sailors and the cruelty with which it had been suppressed stirred the whole of the Netherlands. Solidarity strikes hit many cities, and a campaign to set free the detained sailors was set in motion on communist initiative.

In July 1934 Amsterdam and Rotterdam witnessed sizeable unemployed demonstrations with backing from other working people: solidarity strikes, fund collecting and a protest petition to the government (signed by more than one and a half million people).

Although the trade union movement remained split during the 1930s, the country's leading union organisations gathered in strength and increased their influence. The Netherlands Trade Union Federation attached to the Social Democratic Workers' Party had 369,000 members in 1940, while the Catholic unions had 186,000 members, the Protestant unions 119,000.

Communists played a leading part in organising the mass worker actions. In February 1930 a new leadership was elected orienting Communists to shoring up links with the people. The party adopted a decision on the need for broad communist participation in work at factories and mills, in cooperatives and the armed forces. And the party gained four seats at the 1933 parliamentary elections.

The 1935 Party Congress adopted a new name for the party—the

Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) which saw its main objective in safeguarding the country from the fascist threat—a policy ratified and developed by the Party Congress of 1938.

Party policy paid dividends: over the decade communist membership rose tenfold, reaching 11,000 members by 1940. And at the 1939 elections as many as 117,000 votes were cast for communist candidates, triple the 1929 vote.

During the 1930s the activity of various semi-fascist and fascist parties began to gain momentum; the biggest was the National Socialist Movement (NSB) formed by Anton Mussert in 1931. At the 1935 parliamentary elections the NSB obtained some 8 per cent of the vote; but the success was shortlived, and its share dipped to about 4 per cent in 1937 and even less in 1939. One reason for the defeat of the National Socialists was the growing unity of anti-fascist action by Dutch working people.

The anti-fascist action had forced the Colijn government back in 1933 to pass laws somewhat restricting NSB activity. Parades, terrorist acts and other assaults by NSB storm troopers ran into mounting resistance from democratic forces: workers of diverse political and religious convictions were taking part with Communists in counter-demonstrations and protest meetings. Communists and representatives of left-wing forces set up the Union of Struggle Against Fascism.

Left Socialists began to join Communists in action against the fascist threat from the latter part of the 1930s. The social democratic magazines *Freiheit* and *Arbeid* took an anti-fascist line, and in the summer of 1935 Socialists and Liberals formed the anti-fascist Unity Through Democracy organisation. The process of forming unity from below was now in full flow, and in 1937 Communists and left Socialists set up the Vigilance Committee over National Socialism. Although resistance by social democratic leadership, refusing to cooperate with Communists, hindered the formation of a broad anti-fascist front, the Communist Party made a considerable contribution to mobilising all anti-fascist forces so that, by the end of the 1930s, the influence of fascist organisations had sharply fallen.

In *Switzerland* the strike struggle also gained momentum during the economic crisis years. In response to entrepreneurial arbitrary actions, as the bosses sought a way out of their economic problems at the workers' expense, a wave of strikes rolled through Zurich, Basle, Geneva and other industrial centres. The biggest actions were those by construction workers in Basle in 1930 and fitters in heating equipment in Zurich between 1931 and 1932.¹

Communists led a number of strikes, defending the right of the

¹ See G. P. Dragunov, *Switzerland: History and the Present (An Essay on Recent History)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 51 (in Russian).

working class in parliament and the press.¹ In 1936 the Communist Party of Switzerland (KPS) backed the movement whose participants were seeking protection from the consequences of the crisis in organising wide-ranging public work schemes. At the same time, Communists were exposing the attempts by social democratic and trade union leaders who headed the movement to portray it as "socialist" in the sense of being bound to resolve all problems.

In the circumstances of crisis and depression fascist forces were on the march. In fact, fascist organisations—the National Front, the National Alliance and the Swiss Fascist Party—all operated legally.

The Federal Council tolerated the fascist organisations and turned its repressive measures against progressives, primarily Communists. Communist activity was banned in several cantons in 1937, and judicial reprisals were taken against fighters of the International Brigades.

In the fight against the fascist danger Communists and left Social Democrats came together, and the 1936 elections in several Swiss towns were held under the sign of unity of left forces against the fascist offensive.

In 1939 the Communist Party put forward a programme of defending Switzerland from the fascist threat, which envisaged a purge of the state apparatus and the armed forces, a ban on fascist organisations. The programme certainly attracted the attention of all democrats.

In *Portugal* the early 1930s saw the final formation of a fascist regime headed by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar who became Prime Minister in 1932. Between 1930 and 1932 the National Union fascist party (the only legal party) was organised, and an authoritarian constitution was adopted in 1933. The regime tried to replace the class trade unions by "national" unions that were to base their work on corporative principles and closely cooperate with employers' guilds—the *gremio*. In response to plans to form "national" unions, workers declared a general strike in whose organisation Communists, Anarcho-Syndicalists and Socialists worked together. In several areas of the country the strike grew into an armed uprising. After the strike had been suppressed, and in spite of police terror, underground union organisations continued to function. Although recruitment into fascist unions had run into trouble, the regime managed generally to implement its plan of forming corporative unions. In the face of the virulent terror, the Portuguese Communist Party continued its illegal activity, combining it with the use of legal and semi-legal organisational opportunities. It made considerable efforts

¹ Marino Bodenmann, *Zum 40. Jahrestag der Gründung der Kommunistischen Partei der Schweiz*, Zurich, 1961, pp. 30-31.

to set up party organisations and to popularise the illegal press. At the same time it played an active part in establishing unity committees at places of work which gained recognition as workers' representatives; Communists also worked in the fascist unions. All that enabled the party to maintain contact with the people and lead their fight against the dictatorship.¹ The working class did not lay down arms in combating Portuguese fascism which after the outbreak of Civil War in Spain resorted more and more to open terror against the common people.

The economy of *Ireland* suffered badly from the crisis which depressed the already grim position of the working people. The legacy of colonialism in the Irish economy left its mark on the social and political outlook of the working class. The lack of modern industry, the predominance of small-scale production, the exceptionally rapid turnover of the workforce and the limited number of inveterate workers made it difficult for class awareness to develop and the labour movement to grow.

The incomplete national liberation revolution and the country's division had a contradictory effect on the consciousness of Irish workers. On the one hand, participation in the patriotic movement certainly motivated the ordinary people's masses, but the lack of maturity of the working class made it prone to the influence of the national bourgeoisie with its slogans of national anti-imperialist unity. In the circumstances of building up an independent economy, the Fianna Fáil Party's appeals that found ready response among the people played down class contradictions and advanced the notion of community of national objectives.

In 1939 Irish trade unions had some 250,000 members. As a rule, they were organised on the workshop principle: a number of unions uniting workers of different trades operated at the same factories. This organisational fragmentation was aggravated by the very weak centralisation of the workshop unions.

The National Executive Committee of the Irish Trade Union Congress—the all-Ireland Centre of the Union Movement—held the principal executive power within the unions. It was responsible also for the trade unions of the liberated part of Ireland (*Eire*), and those unions that had their headquarters in Northern Ireland, as well as branches of individual large British unions.²

Many of the Irish union figures tried to preserve the organisational unity of the labour movement despite the country's division. Right-wing union leaders like W. O'Brien and W. Foreign sought to change Congress's structure for the purpose of organising Irish unions on a

¹ Alvaro Cunhal, *Algumas experiências de 50 anos de luta do PCP*, pp. 15-16.

² *Irish Trade Union Congress, 1944-1945*, pp. 16-17.

purely national basis and forming a separate union centre that would unite the Eire unions. The struggle between adherents to the existing union structure and advocates of labour movement organisation on a purely national basis was objectively one between the left wing striving to enrich the Irish union movement with the experience of the international proletariat, and the right wing which exaggerated the specific peculiarities of the Irish labour movement, subordinated the union movement to national-bourgeois parties and thereby intensified its isolation and seclusion within national bounds.

The Labour Party's influence was minimal; it suffered from the same internal problems as did the unions. It never put forward its own national programme proposing to reunify the country or to resolve the urgent tasks of building up a national economy. The lack of effective leadership within the labour movement led to a situation where labour unrest was not properly developed in strike struggle. Irish workers did rise up in defence of their rights, but those strikes normally arose and took place in a spontaneous way, divorced from the struggle of workers in other industries.

During the 1930s fresh forces appeared in the arena of class struggle, which gave an outlet to the mood of disaffection with the conciliatory policy of labour movement leaders and brought Irish workers and peasants closer to the most progressive trend of the times.

Revolutionary workers' groups—Marxist cells under a single leadership—sprang up in the 1930s in the major Irish cities of Dublin, Belfast and Cork. In the first two years of the decade members of those groups took an active part in worker actions against government attempts to transfer the burden of the economic crisis on to the working people. The revolutionary worker groups did a great deal of organisational work in the countryside, explaining to farmers and labourers the invariable connection between the fight for land and the fight against capitalism, for radical changes in the countryside, the need for an alliance between the poor farmers and urban workers. Farmers' committees began to appear with the active assistance of worker groups up and down the countryside, and their first all-Ireland congress took place in early April 1930.

In 1933 the revolutionary worker groups united into the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) which called on workers and peasants to unite in the effort to heal the split in the country, and to attain national independence and social emancipation of the working people. Irish Communists set the workers the task of fighting for hegemony in the national liberation movement, took the initiative in uniting Ireland's democratic forces against the fascist sections of Blue Shirts who were beginning to come to life from early 1933. The Irish Anti-Fascist Labour League led by the communist leader Roderick Connolly was set up at a mass meeting of workers in 1934. With direct

participation of Communists Irish democrats organised a mass re-buff to the Blue Shirts and barred the way to Irish fascism.

The world economic crisis began in *Scandinavia* in 1930. The bankruptcy of large companies such as the Transatlantic in Denmark and the Ivar Kreuger concern in Sweden symbolised the end of "prosperity" in the north of Europe. The crisis caused a sharp fall in industrial output: between 1929 and 1932 it fell by 25 per cent in Norway and 21 per cent on average in Sweden. In Denmark, where industry operated mainly for the domestic market, it fell by only 13 per cent.¹ For the Scandinavian workers the crisis meant mass unemployment. At the height of the crisis in the winter of 1932-1933, the jobless figures were 43.8 per cent of Danish trade unionists, some 42 per cent of Norwegian and 20 per cent of Swedish unionists.²

By late 1933 the crisis was over and economies began to move out of the depression. Industrial output picked up considerably, not least of all helped by enhanced demand for strategic raw materials within the Scandinavian states.

In so far as the economic crisis in Scandinavia was less profound and long-lasting than elsewhere, the workers' position was somewhat better than in other capitalist countries, and the social security system was in a better state. Living standards prior to World War II were higher than in most other European countries.

As with other areas of the capitalist world, Scandinavia witnessed fascist reaction gaining momentum, yet fascism did not have a substantial mass base. Fascists were able to gain certain positions only in Denmark where the impact of German fascism was directly felt. In 1930 the Danish National Socialist Labour Party headed by Frits Clausen came into being. Norway had the openly fascist National Unity Party formed in 1933 and led by the former Defence Minister Vidkun Quisling. Sweden had had fascist organisations formed back in 1924 and throughout the 1920s and 1930s there were over 90 fascist-type organisations in existence publishing in excess of 70 newspapers.³

In the new circumstances the most influential factions of the Scandinavian bourgeoisie pursued a policy of fighting the crisis by stepping up state intervention into the economy while preserving bourgeois-democratic institutions. The new policy was welcomed by social democratic leaders. At the 1932-1933 elections the Social Democrats of Sweden, Denmark and Norway won an overwhelming vic-

¹ See A. S. Kan, *History of the Scandinavian Countries*, Moscow, 1971, p. 218. (in Russian).

² Bjørn Erichsen, *Om arbejderbevaegelsen: En introduktionsbog til dansk arbejderbevaegelses historie*, Copenhagen, 1977, p. 166.

³ Holger Carlsson, *Nazismen i Sverige. Ett varningsord*, Stockholm, 1972, pp. 199-216.

tory, receiving some 40 per cent of the votes and increasing their seats in parliament. An era of 44 years' unbroken rule began for the Social Democratic Party of Sweden as a result of the 1932 elections. Social Democrats put forward anti-crisis programmes whose main thrust was the principle of increasing state intervention in the economic and social spheres. The ruling factions of the bourgeoisie were in accord with the social democratic programme of overcoming the crisis and financing social reforms; in exchange they had the help of social democratic leaders in pursuing a policy of class collaboration.

Scandinavian social democratic leaders actively helped the bourgeoisie in its efforts to stifle the mass worker struggle. Between 1934 and 1936 the Danish government resolved conflicts between workers and employers by adopting extraordinary laws on compulsory arbitration. Norway and Sweden in 1935 and 1938 respectively produced agreements between central employers' bodies and trade union organisations defining the procedure for concluding collective agreements. Those agreements made difficult open struggle between labour and capital, and vividly demonstrated how the reformist union leaders had cast class struggle principles into oblivion. Strikes and boycotts were only possible after a complicated conciliatory procedure laid down in the agreements.

The working-class struggle in the prewar decade was in two directions: worker resistance to the onslaught of the bourgeoisie trying to place the burden of the crisis upon the workers, and the fight against the fascist danger and war. What was distinctive about the mass actions of the 1930s was that they were mainly economic, although in some cases they had a political resonance.

The most acute conflict broke out in the spring of 1931 in the timber and wood processing area of Ådalen in Sweden. In support of the strikers who had turned down the terms of a new collective agreement being offered them, workers declared solidarity strikes. One took place in the town of Kramfors, the centre of the Ådalen region, where a peaceful demonstration of strikers was fired on by soldiers. Four men and one woman were killed, and about ten wounded.¹

News of those tragic events soon reached other parts of the country, and in the north and the capital protest demonstrations and strikes took place, accompanied by clashes with the police. As many as 150,000 people took part in the 19 May demonstration in Stockholm—actually involving all the city's organised workers.² On the day of the funeral, 21 May, trade union leaders called on all the workers

¹ Bertil Dahlgren, *Skotten i Ådalen*, Stockholm, 1968, pp. 21, 24.

² Fritjof Lager, *Ådalen 1931*, Stockholm, 1956, p. 74.

of Sweden to down tools for five minutes.¹ But 100,000 workers responded to the communist appeal and held a day-long strike. In addition ten thousand worked no more than half the day. Throughout the country some 70,000 workers took part in protest demonstrations.²

The Ådalen strike continued from 15 to 26 May 1931. During that time power in the area was actually transferred to a central strike committee consisting of 19 elected people. Many of them were Communists. The strikers' demand—to withdraw troops and strikebreakers—was met. The Ådalen events inscribed a memorable page in the annals of the Swedish labour movement.

Actions by workers employed on public works had great importance for the Swedish labour movement in the 1930s. A national conference held in Sweden in May 1934 was a great success for the working people; it was attended by representatives of 20,000 workers employed on the public work schemes and of the unemployed. The conference adopted an action programme that included some communist proposals.³

One result of the stubborn struggle of Scandinavian workers was the introduction of progressive social legislation and the repeal of anti-worker laws adopted in the late 1920s. Denmark had the Steincke laws (named after the social security minister) passed in 1933, establishing general insurance in the event of sickness. The size of social benefit was linked to the cost of living index. Low-paid workers received free medical service and sickness benefit. Similar social reforms were adopted in Sweden and Norway. From 1938 unemployment insurance became compulsory in Norway. In the same year Norwegian women were the first in Scandinavia formally to gain access to all state employment. Old-age pensions (from the age of 70) were introduced in Norway in 1936; among the reforms adopted in Sweden in the 1930s the one providing for higher pensions was particularly noteworthy.

Laws on summer holidays paid for by employers were also considerable gains by the white and blue collar workers of Scandinavia: nine days in Norway (1936) and twelve days in Denmark (1937) and Sweden (1938); farm workers, sailors and salespeople in Norway (1936) and Sweden (1938) received an eight-hour working day. And a number of anti-worker laws were repealed.

The Scandinavian working class took an active part in the anti-fascist and anti-war struggle restraining the forces of fascist reaction and militarism.

¹ Arvid Vretling, *Arbetarmodern i Ådalen*, Stockholm, 1931, p. 13.

² Fritjof Lager, op. cit., pp. 94, 95, 72.

³ For more details see O. V. Chernyshova, *The Labour Movement in Sweden on the Eve of World War II (1929-1939)*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 111-15 (in Russian).

The solidarity movement with republican Spain between 1936 and 1939 constituted a valuable contribution of Scandinavian workers to the anti-fascist struggle. In Sweden, Denmark and Norway committees came into being for providing material and moral aid to the fighting republicans. The movement was extensive and involved various sections of the population.

The greatest success in fighting to form a united front was that of Swedish workers. In October 1936 a Swedish Aid to Spain Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Georg Branting, and by late 1938 it had 354 regional sections. The committee put out the journal *Solidarity* whose circulation reached 22,000 copies; in just three years it collected 4,300,000 krona.¹

Hundreds of Scandinavians fought on Spanish soil in the International Brigades; a special Scandinavian battalion was formed in 1938. Of the 500 Swedes fighting in Spain 164 met their death there.² Of the 600 Danes 220 died in Spain.³ Some 400 Norwegians fought in Spain.⁴

The upsurge in mass worker action in Scandinavia took place with the active participation of Communists and, as a rule, under their leadership. The consistent stance of Communists in safeguarding the workers' rights promoted the communist parties' influence, so that their membership rose during the 1930s, as did the votes they gained in the Scandinavian parliaments.

After the Seventh Comintern Congress, the communist parties of Scandinavia launched an energetic campaign for unity of workers and democrats. Although in the 1935-1936 pre-election campaigns the communist parties' policy in favour of a common electoral alliance with the Socialists met no support from the ruling social democratic parties, the communist parties appealed to the electorate to vote for Social Democrats in areas with no communist candidates. As a result of the flexible tactics, Communists succeeded in considerably improving relations with rank-and-file Social Democrats—workers and left-wing intellectuals.

Finland felt the effects of world economic crisis back in 1928. The drop in production in various industries had led to a considerable worsening of the workers' position and growth in unemployment which at the height of the crisis climbed to 100,000 mark. Real wages fell over the four crisis years by 52 per cent, and the 1928 precrisis level was only reached in 1937 and 1938.

With the onset of economic crisis internal political reaction and

¹ Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia, No. 4, 1973, pp. 7, 8, 9.

² Göte Nilsson, *Svenskar i spanska inbördeskriget*, Stockholm, 1972, p. 5.

³ Bjørn Erichsen, op. cit., p. 129.

⁴ See M. T. Meshcheryakov, *The Spanish Republic and the Comintern*, Moscow, 1981, p. 63 (in Russian).

anti-Soviet trends in the country's foreign policy began to gain momentum. With the coming to power of the Svinhufvud government in the summer of 1930 this policy reached its zenith. The new government issued instructions to arrest the entire parliamentary faction of the electoral alliance of socialist workers and smallholders. That summer a large trial took place to deal with almost 1,200 trade union organisations accused of cooperating with Communists. More than a thousand local trade union branches were dissolved in the course of a year,¹ and then the Finnish Trade Union Organisation (FTUO) was banned on court orders; Communists and other left-wingers in the labour movement had played a leading role in the FTUO, so its outlawing came as a great boon to right-wing social democratic leaders who had had a blatant hand in the order.

The difficulties that the labour movement had to face during the 1930s grew worse because of the actions of leaders of the Social Democratic Party who took a right-wing stance and propagated a fanatical anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. They actually were aiding and abetting the bourgeoisie in its attack on the living standards of the working people and helped demoralise the working class by calling on it to make sacrifices during the economic crisis. They did not expose the anti-democratic and real essence of the pro-fascist (the so-called Lapuan) movement, and that meant de facto capitulation to fascism.

Yet the bourgeoisie did not succeed in pacifying Finnish workers. On May Day 1930, despite the government ban, virtually all towns witnessed anti-fascist demonstrations by workers. Clashes with the police and unrest continued throughout the whole of May. That November a protest meeting of unemployed drew many thousands of people in Helsinki, and clashes occurred between demonstrators and the police; a youth demonstration also ran into trouble with the police.

Between 1933 and 1934 the strike movement of lumber workers, builders and metal-workers intensified. On the eve of World War II there were 5,000-6,000 workers on strike every year. Many workers' actions ended in victory and they managed to win higher wages and better working conditions.

Communists took an active part in organising the mass struggle and pursued a policy of labour unity and anti-fascist front of all democrats and workers.

The Eighth Conference of the Communist Party of Finland in 1931 set the party the task of raising the working class for combating fascist terror. The centre of gravity of party organisational work was transferred to the factories.

¹ See Y. Krastyn, *Finland under Fascist Tyranny*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1942, p. 26 (in Russian).

After the FTUO's rout in October 1930 a new union organisation was formed—the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (CFTU), initially consisting of some 15,000 members, which comprised about a sixth of the banned FTUO membership. Calling on their members and all workers to join the reformist unions, the Communist Party of Finland devoted its efforts to turning the CFTU into a militant mass organisation of the working class. Membership of CFTU had doubled by 1931 and reached 70,000 by the end of the 1930s.

The greatest political achievement of joint action by Finnish workers was the fight in defence of Toivo Antikainen, a leading member of the Communist Party and prominent labour movement figure. He had been sentenced to death. The movement to overturn the bill on bringing in the death penalty and Antikainen's death sentence became a mass demonstration against fascism, and the government failed to get its bill through parliament.

The Sixth Party Congress of November 1935, basing itself on decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress, stated the party's readiness to cooperate with all champions of peace and democracy. The Communist Party called on all citizens to work to form an alliance of democratic forces at the 1936 parliamentary elections, to have candidates on the social democratic list who favoured the formation of an anti-war and anti-fascist front.

The party's campaign helped to fortify the anti-fascist forces. Left-wing tendencies grew within the Social Democratic Party. And the Communist Party set up cooperation with the youth organisation Academic Socialist Society, with the Collegiate Society and with many regional social democratic organisations.

The working class nonetheless did not succeed in stemming the anti-Soviet aspirations of the Finnish bourgeoisie, and the social democratic leaders came out openly against concerted action by the working class. In 1937 the Social Democratic Party Executive Committee expelled the Academic Socialist Society and many other advocates of a united front and friendship with the USSR. At the Social Democratic Party Congress of 1939 the party leaders supported bourgeois demands to increase expenditure on defence.

As a consequence of the policy of the Finnish bourgeois reactionary clique and the connivance at it of the right-wing social democratic leaders, Finland was drawn into war with the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1939.

SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN THE USA, CANADA, JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA

The economy of the *United States of America* suffered immense damage from the world economic crisis. National income fell from \$87.4 billion in 1929 to \$ 41.7 billion in 1932; industrial output nose-

dived to the 1905-1906 level. And by 1932 the country had 17 million people out of work, i.e. practically every other hired worker lost his or her job.¹ The race discrimination laws now really began to bite: Black workers were the first to be fired and the last to be rehired. The lack of even the rudiments of a social security system and unemployment assistance made the workers' position particularly onerous, even unbearable. Between 1929 and 1933, William Foster wrote, "The United States, erstwhile land of boasted capitalist prosperity, became a nightmare of hunger, sickness, destitution and pauperization."²

In the crisis situation the key form of the labour movement was the popular struggle to introduce social insurance against unemployment, to render material aid to millions of unfortunates, to end eviction and other attacks by the authorities, the employers and landlords. Thanks to its scope, organisation and determination the struggle of the unemployed acquired an evermounting political significance. Both objective conditions and the selfless actions of left forces, above all Communists, played a valuable part. Despite its relatively small size the Communist Party of the USA was able right at the start of the 1930s to head the unprecedented movement against destitution and hunger.

More than a million people took part in protest demonstrations on 6 March 1930 against unemployment in US industrial centres; they had been organised on communist initiative. Communists everywhere formed militant mass organisations of the unemployed (national unemployed councils) which became the driving force of numerous actions.³ National unemployment marches on Washington took place in December 1931 and December 1932; it was Communists again who played a leading part in their organisation. The Communist Party also took an effective part in the World War I veterans' movement which culminated in the spectacular Hunger March on Washington in the summer of 1932.

Not a day went by without some industrial city or rural locality becoming an arena of stormy demonstrations by the unemployed or ruined farmers or young people who had lost all hope of finding a place in life. Black workers were putting up increasingly stubborn resistance to racist terror and discrimination. The US ruling groups responded to the acute exacerbation of class struggle by intensifying police terror that nonetheless failed to produce the expected results. The bankruptcy of the Republican Party's economic and so-

¹ *Labor Fact Book*, 111, New York, 1936, pp. 49-51.

² W. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, New York, 1952, p. 279.

³ See V. L. Malkov, *The Labour Movement in the USA During the 1929-1933 World Economic Crisis*, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian).

cial policy caused the defeat of President Hoover at the November 1932 presidential elections. The Democrats and their presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt prevailed. They owed their political success to the widespread rebellious feelings among the common people, to the unprecedented scale of the unemployment struggle, to the farmer protest and, lastly, to an upsurge in the democratic movement. Roosevelt and his close assistants did not conceal the fact that they saw in the promised reform policy the only chance to defuse a general explosion of popular discontent capable of causing immense social disruption and putting an end to the old-type capitalism.¹

Fearing a further sharp leftward turn by the masses and foreseeing the inevitable consequences of radicalism among the rank-and-file for the stability of the two-party system, the new President began to pursue a policy of stimulating the economy and removing the most glaring manifestations of social inequality among US workers. His New Deal policy envisaged the bourgeois state's active intervention in the mechanism of social reproduction, its regulation and compulsory cartelisation in combination with various measures in the social sphere, including the launching of a system of public work schemes for the unemployed and the extending of labour rights. Although those reforms did enable the Administration somewhat to improve the workers' position they were only a palliative. The unemployed movement, the strike campaign and the gradual renovation and radicalisation of the trade union movement all continued to grow at a rapid rate. From 1934 general strikes at factories in the large industrial centres or in individual industries followed one after another. The sit-down strike became a popular means of struggle; it was particularly widespread at motor works.²

In the best traditions of class solidarity and in a situation of overall upsurge in anti-monopoly feeling US workers were fighting for higher wages, a shorter working day and the right to a collective agreement and formation of mass unions in the main branches of industry. General strikes at Toledo, Minneapolis and particularly San Francisco in 1934 opened up a new page in the history of the US labour movement. They marked the growth of its militancy and a new confidence in its own power. In many cases clashes between workers and the police, troops and corporations' guards ended in bloodshed.

¹ F.D.R., *His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, Vol. 1, New York, 1950, pp. 281, 282, 450; Thomas H. Greer, *What Roosevelt Thought. The Social and Political Ideas of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Michigan, 1958, p. 211; V. L. Malkov, D. G. Nadzhafov, *America at the Crossroads, 1929-1938*, Moscow, 1968 (in Russian).

² See *History of the US Labour Movement in Recent Times*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, pp. 423-31; V. L. Malkov, *The "New Deal" in the USA. Social Movements and Social Policy*, Moscow, 1973 (both in Russian); S. Fine, *The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937*, Ann Arbor, 1969.

The bourgeois press wrote of the "small civil war" in which whole industrial areas, miners' communities and ports were involved.

The prewar years became an important turning point in the development of the class consciousness of the American proletariat. Having had Gompersite dogmas, devotion to bourgeois institutions and political "neutralism" drummed into their heads for so long, the workers made an important step forward in comprehending their class interests. The ideological-political thrust of worker actions showed, as never before, clearly and decisively that the US working class was resolutely on the side of the forces advocating social progress and, conversely, sharply fenced itself off from conservative and right-wing extremist forces. The ideas of deep-going social changes, of socialism and communism, and anti-war and anti-fascist sentiments were all becoming widespread at the grass-roots.¹

The peak of strike activity was reached in 1937 when it was greater than at any time in labour movement history (some two million strikers). In the rigorous circumstances of chronic mass unemployment American workers manifested a high degree of staunchness, unity of intention and understanding of the goals of struggle.

In 1933 the most mass movement arose for organising millions of US working people into industrial unions. The workers displayed in that movement an appreciation of the need for organised struggle to improve living conditions and, at the same time, a protest against the conservative obsession with workshop union organisation and the policy of "businesslike trade unionism" pursued by AFL leaders. At motor works, iron and steel plants, chemical and wireless factories and other key industries, new mass union organisations arose which, in contrast to the conservative AFL unions, gravitated towards decisive action and more energetic involvement in the political struggle. As a rule, they were based on the principle of uniting workers at the workplace. In November 1935 advocates of industrial unions formed the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), headed by John Lewis, within the framework of the AFL. By the end of 1937 membership of the CIO was two million.

Some AFL leaders headed by Lewis thought it necessary to lead a new movement to avert the possibility of the "new trade unionism" shifting to a revolutionary class struggle. Most of the old AFL leaders saw industrial unions as a dangerous rival and hostile force, and therefore did what they could to destroy them.

The hostile attitude of AFL leaders to industrial unions and fur-

¹ See D. G. Nadzhafov, *The American People Against War and Fascism, 1933-1939*, Moscow, 1969 (in Russian); Len De Caux *Labor Radical. From the Wobblies to the CIO. A Personal History*, Boston, 1970; W. Mortimer, *Organize: My Life as a Union Man*, Boston, 1972; R. Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Unions*, Bloomington, 1980.

ther radicalisation of their rank-and-file members made a rift in the union movement inevitable. In November 1938 Pittsburgh was the venue for a congress of industrial unions which instituted a new trade union organisation—the Congress of Industrial Organisations. John Lewis was elected president. Inasmuch as the CIO took shape in bitter class battles and relied on rank-and-file workers, it was a militant union organisation in the early years and embodied the best traditions of the US labour movement. Communists played an outstanding organising role in the campaign to form industrial unions. In many cases they headed various of the union branches—from the locals up to the decision-making bodies of the industrial unions. It was in those years that the Communist Party was joined by such courageous fighters for the workers' cause as Gus Hall, Henry Winston, James Jackson, Gilbert Green and Benjamin Davis. They gained their militant baptism in strike pickets at the big industrial works and in the front ranks of numerous political demonstrations.¹

The unemployed movement made marked gains in the fight for social insurance and assistance. On 4 February 1934 the Workers' Congress for Unemployment Benefit met in Washington at the call of the Communist Party (it had 900 participants from 35 American states). Many local AFL organisations were in favour of the communist-proposed bill on social insurance. The National Congress for Unemployment Insurance commenced work in Washington 5-7 January 1935, gathering a record number of delegates (some 2,500) from the most diverse worker organisations and political parties. The bill on social unemployment insurance put forward by that forum opened up an important stage in the campaign for the major social reform of the New Deal.²

In March 1936 there was a merger between unemployed organisations formed by the Socialists and organisations (more numerous) in which Communists had been playing a leading part. The united organisation took the name Workers' Alliance; its role and numbers were very impressive within the labour movement.³

Under pressure from the working-class struggle the Roosevelt Administration was obliged to undertake a number of social reforms. In 1935 Congress passed the Wagner Act establishing workers' rights to organise in a trade union and to make a collective agreement; this was followed by the law on social insurance against unemployment and old-age pensions, the act on government control over the coal industry and the act on additional funds for public works.

¹ George Morris, "Sixty Years of Communist Trade Union Work", *Political Affairs*, August-September 1979, pp. 8-9.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 6, 9 February 1935, Vol. 15, pp. 156, 157.

³ See *History of the US Labour Movement in Recent Times*, Vol. 1, pp. 453-61.

Influential sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie made a bitter attack on the New Deal, but that only accelerated the polarisation of political forces in the country and the formation of an informal New Deal democratic coalition. Unity of democratic forces brought a big win for Roosevelt at the 1936 presidential elections. The American Labor Party of New York, set up by New York trade unions, gave him effective backing by mobilising workers to vote for the President. Although Labor Party leaders did what they could to affirm their allegiance to Roosevelt as a national leader, the idea of an independent political organisation of workers was ensconced in the very fact of the party's formation.

The development of fresh trends within the class and political struggle, shifts in the labour movement all demanded the most circumspect attention from leaders of the Communist Party USA.

William Foster, outstanding leader of the American and international labour movement, played a big part in elaborating and justifying the new tactics. Bearing in mind the trends in domestic and world development and wishing to overcome sectarian mistakes, the Communist Party pursued a policy from 1934 of uniting the working class, the farmers, the Black masses and middle strata in the fight for social progress.¹ The defence of the gains embodied in the New Deal social reforms was acquiring particular importance in that connection.

In the run-up to the 1936 election which was of huge political significance, the Communist Party came out in favour of Roosevelt's New Deal. The Party Congress meeting in June 1936 noted that Communists were striving for universal unity and concentration of all forces of the working class and its allies in the fight against political coalition representing the Republican Party, the Freedom League and the reactionary press—i.e., the most conservative groups of the big bourgeoisie. In taking odds with the principal slogan of the Socialist Party ("Socialism Versus Capitalism") the Communist Party openly declared that the main issue of the political moment was that of campaigning to defend democracy and to ward off its enemies.

Time was to show the correctness of those tactics. The Communist Party attracted supporters from non-proletarian strata and took an active part in the broad democratic movements (anti-war, Black rights, students, etc), in doing so it helped in the most active fashion to crystallise the informal New Deal progressive coalition.²

¹ Henry Winston, "Front-Rankers in the Class Struggle", *Political Affairs*, November 1974, pp. 6-16.

² *The Communist*, March 1938, pp. 214-19; see also V. L. Malkov, "Communists, Socialists and the New Deal", *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya*, No. 5, 1974, pp. 39-54.

Support for the democratic movement led to stronger links between the party and the people, turning it into an important factor of the country's political affairs. At the same time, the party did not dissolve into a broad movement for social reforms, although revisionists led by Earl Browder did try to pursue a policy of destroying the party's class stance from the late 1930s, thereby distorting the tactics of the anti-fascist and anti-monopoly alliance inscribed in the corresponding party resolutions. Both in the ideological struggle and in the day-to-day activity the party did not draw a veil over the diverse objectives and tasks of different class and political forces comprising the progressive alliance. While showing political initiative and maintaining ideological independence, the party defended progressive aspects of Roosevelt's New Deal from attacks from the right. At the same time, as it was taking a consistently class stance, it criticised the liberal bourgeoisie and its leaders, showing the restricted nature of their policy and dependence on the interests of finance-industrial capital.

Three times in the prewar decade (in 1932, 1936 and 1940) the democratic coalition formed around the New Deal reform programme had resounding victories at the presidential elections and managed to implement many important changes: recognition of workers' rights to organise in trade unions, introduction of a social insurance system for the unemployed and old-age pensions, organisation of public works, a ban on child labour, establishment of a limit to the working day and of minimum wages, and assistance to small farmers. The working class was the mainstay of the alliance of all democratic elements, even though it could not become its leading and guiding force owing to its own insufficient ideological and political maturity.

The 1930s were a period of momentum among workers and trade unions towards independent political action, the creation of a mass workers' party that would stand opposed to the two-party system.¹

The achievements of the 1930s (even though they were limited) were wrenched from the ruling class by the workers in harsh and persistent struggle. In the course of events, relations and interaction took shape between the working class and other democratic sections which enabled them to foil reaction's plans and to keep the liberal-progressive wing of the Democratic Party led by Roosevelt in power. Promotion of the creative initiative of the rank-and-file, especially the working class, reached a very high level. Communists must take much of the historical credit for this in that they worked extremely hard right in the midst of the people, awakening in them an urge to fight, and teaching them to tell friend from foe and correctly to assess the political situation.

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 15, 6 April 1935, Vol. 15, pp. 416, 417.

The 1929-1933 world economic crisis had a disastrous effect on the economy of *Canada*, oriented largely on exports to the USA and Great Britain. By early 1933 industrial output had virtually halved and unemployment, according to official figures, amounted to 700,000, which meant that every third hired worker was out of a job. Wages fell by 23 per cent on average.¹ The crisis in industry linked up with a sharp exacerbation of the agrarian crisis. How extensive it was may be seen from the fact that more than a million people out of a population of 10 million had to resort to some form of state assistance every year up to the end of the 1930s.²

The Communist Party of Canada played an important part in overcoming the passive mood that afflicted many workers in the initial phase of the crisis, and the defeatism of leaders of the workshop unions at the time of the employer's onslaught on the working class. At the end of 1929 the Workers' Unity League (WUL) was formed as a new centre of industrial trade unions. The WUL set up a number of durable industrial unions and its membership reached 35,000.³ The League's activity in the first part of the 1930s had a substantial impact on several intra-national and national unions, encouraging them to change to active forms of struggle. The WUL led about three quarters of the country's strikes.⁴ The unemployed movement acquired an organised and mass character with its help.⁵ One of the major demands of the labour movement in those years was the introduction of social insurance and unemployment insurance, government-organised public work schemes and assistance to the needy.

Richard Bennett's Conservative government, forced to allot miserly sums in hand-outs and public works, at the same time was unleashing repression against strikers and the unemployed movement. The main thrust was against the Communist Party. In August 1931 party leaders, including the General Secretary Tim Buck, were arrested and sentenced to penal servitude and the party was outlawed. Right up to 1936 the party operated in an illegal and semi-legal status.

Government repression made more difficult but did not halt consolidation of trade union forces. The WUL prepared the ground for further development of the movement to form industrial unions in the latter part of the 1930s. Progressive trends in the US trade union movement bound up with CIO activity had a favourable effect on

¹ *Wages and Hours of Labour in Canada (Report No. 17)*, 1929, 1932 and 1933, Ottawa, 1934, p. 112; *Canada Year Book*, 1939, p. 385.

² *National Employment Commission. Final Report*, Ottawa, 1938, p. 47.

³ See *The Communist International Before the Seventh World Congress (Material)*, Moscow, 1935, p. 384 (in Russian).

⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁵ See *Canada. 1918-1945. Historical Essay*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 203-22 (in Russian).

the evolution of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. Bearing that in mind, the Communist Party dissolved the WUL and called on all its organisations to join the TLCC, thereby becoming a factor in the renovation of the Canadian union movement, which was expressed in the formation of industrial unions. That far-sighted move helped to strengthen the positive shifts within the TLCC and to swell the ranks of the unions. Between 1935 and 1938 the number of union members increased by 100,000 and reached the record level of 382,000.¹

By contrast with the USA, the workers succeeded in preserving TLCC unity and cooperation within the CIO of workshop and industrial unions. However, in January 1939, giving way to AFL leadership pressure, the TLCC Executive Committee adopted the divisive decision of excluding several industrial unions from the Congress, involving dozens of thousands of members. Those unions formed the Canadian Congress of Industrial Trade Unions which, in 1940, merged with the All-Canadian Congress of Labor into the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

During the 1930s Canada witnessed an upsurge in democratic struggle against war and fascism, a social struggle of urban "middle classes" and farmers, and the regeneration of a movement to set up a third party. The new mass political movement which was opposed to the traditional two-party system initially was a mixture of diverse political organisations. In July 1932 a conference met in Calgary consisting of resurrected independent labour parties of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the newly-created Socialist Party of British Columbia, as well as members of farmers' organisations from Alberta and Manitoba. The conference proclaimed the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) as a coalition of worker and farmer organisations. The First CCF Congress met 19-21 July 1933 in Regina. Its manifesto expressed popular anti-capitalist, anti-monopoly and socialist aspirations, a vague ideal of a "new social order" which many saw embodied in the term "cooperative commonwealth".² Towards the summer of 1935 the political opposition mainly representing the urban petty bourgeoisie consolidated itself into another political party calling itself the Reconstruction Party, which advocated the taking of state measures to restrict monopoly omnipotence.

The federal elections held in October 1935 reflected the profound crisis in Canada's party and political system. The Conservative Party suffered a crushing defeat, and victory went to the Liberal Party which gained most seats in parliament. The CCF, Reconstruction Party, Communist Party and Social Credit Party collected nearly 25 per cent of the vote (or a million votes).

¹ *Labour Organizations in Canada, 1970*, Ottawa, 1970, p. XIII.

² See *Canada, 1918-1945, Historical Essay*, pp. 223-47.

The new Liberal government of Mackenzie King was forced under pressure from mass struggle to take a number of measures to democratise society (legalising the Communist Party, removal from the defence ministry responsibility for labour camps and then their dismantling, restrictions on the use of force against strikers, etc.). On the whole the Canadian government and monopolies took only very cautious steps towards promoting state-monopoly regulation, avoiding such pressing reforms as social insurance, recognition of collective agreement practice, trade unions, etc. Insufficient pressure from the labour and democratic movement was having its effect.

The Communist Party was seeking ways of applying the strategy and tactics of Popular Front, as advanced by the Seventh Comintern Congress, to Canada's particular conditions, so as to ensure a united front of the various movements—the CCF, trade unions, farmers' organisations, communist movement and the social protest of urban middle strata. The Communist Party Central Committee Plenum in November 1935 stated that in obtaining conditions the issue of a united and popular front could be resolved through the formation of a federated worker-farmer party and that the CCF could be converted into just such a party. The Communist Party expressed its readiness to join the CCF as a collective member¹, although the CCF petty-bourgeois leadership had turned its back on any contacts with Communists, endeavouring to foist its own reformist policy on the popular anti-monopoly movement.

The policy of cooperation between the Communist Party and the CCF was based on account for the real opportunities for concerted action of Canada's democratic forces and trends to unity of action in defence of popular economic and political demands within the movement itself, represented by the CCF. In spite of the ban slapped on communist contacts by the CCF leadership, local organisations of the CCF and workers' parties joined Communists in many united front actions—in the unemployed movement, in the fight against repressive legislation, for unemployed insurance, at local and provincial elections, and so on. In the latter part of the 1930s cooperation of democratic forces grew markedly in the campaign for peace and against fascism and war.

The Canadian anti-war and anti-fascist movement was an important form of general democratic movement in which the farmers and extensive petty-bourgeois strata of the towns took part along with the working class. Communists were the most active force in all these movements. Communist contacts with the mass movements grew stronger, and between 1934 and 1937 the CPC membership grew

¹ *Toward a Canadian People's Front. Report and Speeches at the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee Communist Party of Canada*, November 1935, pp. 5-28; see also Tim Buck, *The Road Ahead*, Toronto, w.d., pp. 25-26.

from 5,500 to 15,000. On the eve of World War II the Canadian people were overwhelmingly anti-fascist and the country had an informal coalition of democratic forces in favour of peace, democracy and social progress, and opposed to fascism.

The economic crisis also affected *Japan*. Between 1929 and 1931 industrial output fell by roughly 33 per cent. The number of unemployed and semi-employed exceeded 3 million.

In crisis conditions the Japanese bourgeoisie took the path of further reducing the already low level of workers' living standards. Factories became sweatshops and labour was intensified to an almost unbearable extent. With the start of the war of plunder against China on 1 September 1931 the onslaught of employers against the working class bore the slogan of "the country is in danger".

Mass sackings, unprecedented terror and direct plunder of the workers provoked resistance; the number of labour conflicts and strikes doubled during the crisis years. Virtually all strikes were accompanied by mass demonstrations, protest meetings, clashes with the police and gangs of hired thugs. Alongside the growth in the strike struggle the unemployed movement burgeoned. The fight of the jobless became closely intertwined with the strike campaign and the anti-war movement. Unrest also spread to the urban petty bourgeoisie and the students.

From the first days of the war, the Communist Party of Japan organised an active anti-war struggle involving workers and peasants. At the party's call anti-war demonstrations took place everywhere, and illegal meetings were held whose participants called for the immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops from Manchuria and Korea. The Communist Party published an appeal to workers, peasants and soldiers of the entire country, calling on them to take actions everywhere under the slogans "Down with the Imperialist War", "Hands off China" and "Defend Revolutionary China and the Soviet Union."¹ The party formed its own organisations in each infantry regiment in Tokyo and Osaka, in the naval bases of Yokosuka and Kure, on many naval ships and in barracks.² Communist activity was hampered, however, by mass arrests between 1932 and 1933, as a result of which more than 3,000 members of the Communist Party, the Communist Youth League and the National Trade Union Council (Zenkyo) were incarcerated. In 1935 the CPJ Central Committee was smashed and from then on right up to 1945 the party's organised activity on a nationwide scale was actually disrupted.³

The Social Democratic Party actually backed the war under the

¹ *Nihon Kyesanto-no 50nen* (50 Years of the Communist Party of Japan), Tokyo, 1975, pp. 61, 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

slogan "Turn the interests for which Japan is fighting in Manchuria and Mongolia into the popular interests".¹ The mass Socialist Party (Shakai Taishuto) also supported the policy of the top brass in its periodicals, demagogically maintaining that the military groups were inclined against capitalism and fascism, so the proletariat should conclude an alliance with them. As the fascist reaction intensified, leaders of the Socialist Party slid more and more into militarist and chauvinist positions. Its leaders, Abe, Matsuoka, Nisio, stated their unconditional support for the war in China, calling it the "sacred war of the Japanese nation". The All-Japan Federation of Labour (Zenso) they controlled adopted a declaration at its Congress in October 1937 outlawing worker strikes for the whole duration of the war in China.²

Only the Communist Party continued the courageous battle against the predatory war by Japanese imperialism in China.

The world economic crisis hit *Australia* hard. National income fell by a third in 1930/1931, and by 1933 unemployment stood at some half a million people or 30 per cent of the workforce.³ The Labour government of James H. Scullin that held power in the initial crisis years pursued an anti-worker policy. At the 1931 federal elections the United Australia Party of Joseph Lyons won; once it had left the Australian Labour Party it openly shifted to bourgeois positions. At the same time, the New Guard fascist organisation began to rear its head.

Workers responded by stepping up their struggle. The miners' strike in the north of New South Wales had echoes throughout the country.⁴ The leaders of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) actually stood back from repulsing the employers' offensive, which caused much anger among rank-and-file unionists and led to a sharp drop in reformist influence within the union movement.

True to the united workers' front slogan, Communists worked in the unions, supported strikes, headed the unemployed movement, vigorously took part in the campaign against evictions for non-payment of rent. They enjoyed particularly strong influence among workers in the mining industry. On communist initiative there arose committees for organising the fight to reduce the working day and raise wages. The Miners' Federation became the first union in Australia to choose Communists as its leaders—William Orr and Charles Nelson.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³ See K. V. Malakhovsky, *A History of the Australian Union*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 224-25 (in Russian).

⁴ See E. Ross, *Great October and the Australian Labour Movement*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 101-02 (in Russian).

In circumstances of the growing threat of fascism and war, and particularly owing to Japan's war preparations, Communists were advocating energetic struggle against the fascist danger in Australia and condemning the anti-people's government policy that followed in the wake of the British appeasement of the aggressor policy. The Communist Party of Australia encouraged the formation of workers' defence corps.

Thanks to the united front policy fresh sections of workers, farmers and intellectuals were being drawn into political action. And the young Communist Party grew quite strong, its relations with the people became more durable and its membership rose.

FOR UNITY IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR

As the working class asserted itself as the decisive force in the struggle against fascism and war, the ideas of proletarian internationalism were finding an increasingly broad response, facilitating the formation of a movement of anti-fascist solidarity and promoting unity of peace-loving forces. The mounting fascist and war danger provided a strong boost to further development of the *workers' international solidarity movement*, which was taking a variety of forms and involving more and more social strata in the struggle. In different countries this process developed in its own way, but everywhere its driving force was the communist-led working class, and the most common trend was towards a growth in its numbers and organisation, and an urge for unity.

An important landmark on the way to unity of democratic forces was the movement in support of the Chinese people's fight against the Japanese militarists who had seized north-east China in the autumn of 1931 and were posing a direct threat to the USSR. At the appeal of left public organisations protest meetings and rallies took place in many countries.¹

The movement of democratic forces launched in 1933 over the Leipzig Trial was of outstanding importance in organising resistance to fascism and militarism. In holding court proceedings against Georgi Dimitrov and two other Bulgarian Communists, the fascist authorities were motivated by more than domestic policy considerations. They were intending to condemn and discredit in the eyes of the world public the very notion of revolutionary proletarian international solidarity. The Leipzig Trial of Dimitrov was seen by the Nazis as the greatest propaganda exercise they had at their disposal. Their plans came to grief utterly.

¹ See *International Proletarian Solidarity in Combating the Fascist Offensive, 1928-1932*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 280-81, 332, 339, etc. (in Russian).

The fascists erred twice. They were thoroughly unaware of the personality of the No. 1 accused—Georgi Dimitrov, a man of unbending will-power and great dedication to the lofty ideals of communism. They also misjudged the times. The world was changing, and public opinion in many Western countries had become less prone to the world revolution scare tactics; on the contrary, it was more soberly assessing the real threat to the fundamentals of civilisation that came from bourgeois reaction, and especially fascism. It was as if in Leipzig the accused and their accusers had switched places.¹ Dimitrov's fervent speeches nailed to the pillory those who had organised the fascist farce of a trial and the regime of bloody terror in Germany. It was a call to reason and sense of responsibility for the destiny of humanity. And it was heard.

Contrary to the calculations of the Leipzig Trial manipulators, public anger turned against fascism. The movement to free Dimitrov was particularly extensive within the USSR. Strikes, demonstrations and protest rallies took place also in the largest cities of Europe and America. In France all the progressive forces of the nation came together in protest. Communists, Socialists, Radicals, personalities in science and culture, and above all Paul Langevin, Henri Barbusse, Paul Vaillant-Couturier and André Malraux, all resolutely condemned the shameful farce of a trial in Leipzig.² German embassies were bombarded with letters and telegrams demanding the liberation of Dimitrov and his comrades. The World Committee for the Victims of Hitler Fascism was formed on an extensive representative basis; it arranged the London counter-trial. The prestigious investigating commission in London carefully analysed all the accusation material and came to the conclusion that the Communists were not guilty and that "high-placed persons from the National Socialist Party" were implicated in the burning of the Reichstag. The effect this verdict had was immense.³

The setting free of Dimitrov and other Communists encouraged the growth of action throughout the world in defence of prisoners of fascism. The campaign in defence of fascist victims became an important contribution to the formation of the international anti-fascist front. In the mid-1930s the campaign for Ernst Thälmann's and other German worker leaders' release from fascist prisons acquired considerable dimensions. The cruel crushing of the Austrian

¹ See Georgi Dimitrov, *The Leipzig Trial. Speeches, Letters and Documents*, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian); A. Kurella, *Dimitroff contra Göring. Nach Berichten Georgi Dimitroffs über den Reichstagsbrandprozess 1933*, Berlin, 1964.

² Cl. Willard, "Le mouvement de solidarité en France pour la libération de Dimitrov en 1933", *Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez*, 28 September-October 1934, pp. 88-95.

³ See F. I. Firsov, *Communists Against Fascism and War*, Moscow, 1975, p. 7 (in Russian).

workers' insurrection in February 1934 produced an international solidarity movement under the slogan "Hands Off the Heroic Austrian Working Class". As *Pravda* wrote on 1 May 1935, "The harsh, bloody lessons which workers of all countries have learned from social democracy's shameful capitulation to fascism in several nations have helped substantially to extend the possibility everywhere of forming a united front. That certainly is what is valuable, important and new in the international labour movement,"¹ Communists endeavoured to make use of those sentiments to widen constructive dialogue with Social Democrats, and thereby to attain a decisive preponderance in the main direction of the anti-reaction battle and the campaign for peace and socialism.

Comintern appeals to rise above prejudice and bias found understanding and a favourable response among rank-and-file Social Democrats. In the social democratic parties of many lands the idea of unity was becoming so popular that their leaders could not, without risking isolation, ignore the mood. That was the case, for example, in France where, on 11 July 1934, the socialist leader Léon Blum made the following admission in the columns of *Le Peuple*, "For many years, while talks on united action were going on, we thought and calculated as follows: no, no to united action, no to organised unity. And we sought to put it aside and ignore every proposal for partial or temporary concerted action until that time when full and absolute unity would be recognised as possible. I personally held that opinion and have frequently spoken on the subject. I now feel that this standpoint is unjustified."²

The communist policy of restoring unity to the trade union movement also met more and more marked support within the reformist unions. Increasingly national union organisations displayed initiative in restoring unity within the bounds of individual countries and on a wider scale. On 20 December 1934 the Profintern Executive Bureau received a letter from the Norwegian National Trade Union Association stating that the latest Norwegian trade union congress had recognised trade union unity as a vital need and favoured organisational unity on the basis of class positions.

In its appeal of 1 February 1935 to the Norwegian union secretariat, the Profintern Executive Bureau wrote, "The Profintern as a whole and its largest section—the Soviet trade unions—are the most active champions of a rapid and complete restoration of trade union unity in every country and on an international scale."³ Further, in reference to the accumulated positive experience of the unity

¹ *Pravda*, 1 May 1935.

² Quoted from *International Press Correspondence*, No. 42, 3 August 1934, Vol. 14, p. 1085.

³ *Pravda*, 10 February 1935.

campaign in France, Spain and Czechoslovakia, the Profintern advocated the uniting of parallel organisations nationally, which could become "an important step along the way to forming a united trade union International on a class struggle basis".¹

Anti-war activity, right from the moment hotbeds of war came into existence, was at the centre of attention of the international communist movement and the Comintern. There were no more consistent and courageous opponents of the plots being hatched everywhere by international reaction and of its predatory plans than Communists.

Communists were the main force which helped to make successful the International Anti-War Congress in Amsterdam held between 28 and 29 August 1932; the writers Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland were among those calling for the Congress's convocation. The Congress gave a boost to further development of the anti-war movement and the involvement in it of the broadest sections of the people, including workers in reformist trade unions and in the social democratic parties.² Georgi Dimitrov wrote that "The Amsterdam Anti-War Congress and the Amsterdam anti-war movement ... gave the first mass boost back in 1932 to the formation of a united front and posed that question more concretely among the social democratic masses and within the social democratic parties."³

Hitler's seizure of power in Germany and his openly-proclaimed revanchist misanthropic designs brought the struggle for peace to the forefront. On all continents the war and peace issue was becoming most acute and pressing. In June 1933 at communist initiative the Paris Pleyel Hall became the venue for the European Anti-Fascist Congress. Marcel Cachin, outstanding French communist leader, gave the report "Against Hunger, Fascism and War". Many Social Democrats participated in the Congress even though leadership of the Labour and Socialist International had refused to back it.

The Comintern called on communist parties to view the urge by ordinary people throughout the world to preserve peace as the greatest force uniting people in the campaign to form a united front. It was precisely in this way that communist parties in many countries were able to bolster contacts with the people and reach mutual understanding between the various streams of the labour and general democratic movement.

Individual failures did not force Communists to retreat or make them prisoners of a fatalist view that they could do nothing to prevent an imperialist war. With persistence and self-restraint they

¹ *Pravda*, 10 February 1935.

² See *Anti-War Traditions of the International Labour Movement*, Moscow, 1972, p. 297 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

fought for people's minds, for mobilising the people so as to overcome the passivity of some and the indifference of others. They used various ways and means of agitation capable of strengthening people's vigilance towards the designs and conspiracies of the foes of peace. To mark the twentieth anniversary of the start of World War I the communist parties of France, Great Britain, Germany and Poland put out a special manifesto exposing the plans of international imperialism to unleash war.¹ It flung the accusation in the face of the bourgeoisie that it was preparing more crimes and it gave it a grave warning.

All communist parties declared 1 August 1934 an International Anti-War Day. In many capitals of the capitalist world mass demonstrations and protest meetings were held on that day. Over 20,000 people took part in a rally on New York's Union Square.² Workers at the largest factories in Paris stopped work for a while to say "No to War". And communist parties initiated the World Congress of Women Against War and Fascism, held in Paris between 4 and 7 August 1934. The idea of concerted action by all social strata who cherished peace and the destiny of future generations was reflected in the very composition of participants, broad and representative, in the substance of Congress principal documents calling on all peace-loving forces to shield humanity from the "greatest of disasters" bearing down on it.³

The Seventh Comintern Congress was of particular salience in determining communist strategy and tactics in the anti-war movement. The Congress staunchly opposed underestimation of the peace movement, which presented the best opportunities for uniting anti-fascist forces, as well as leftist Trotskyist views of war as the most reliable path to revolution. Noting that, given the existence and constant strengthening of the USSR, the peace campaign was not helpless, the Congress oriented communist parties to forming the widest united front of peace-loving forces.

The Seventh Congress drew a number of conclusions of long-term importance for the communist movement's strategy in the peace campaign. The most important was that fascist aggression was menacing not only the Soviet Union, but also the national independence and very existence of most other countries, big and small. Proceeding from that, the Congress inscribed in a resolution that "If any weak state is attacked by one or more big imperialist powers which want to destroy its national independence ... or to dismember it ...

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 38, 6 July 1934, Vol. 14, pp. 989, 990.

² *Daily Worker*, 2 August 1934.

³ See *International Workers' Solidarity in the Fight Against Fascism and the Launching of World War II (1933-1937)*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 223-25 (in Russian).

a war conducted by the national bourgeoisie of such a country to repel this attack may assume the character of a war of liberation, in which the working class and the Communists of that country cannot abstain from intervening." The resolution went on to underline that "It is the task of the Communists ... to be ... in the front ranks of the fighters for national independence."¹

The Seventh Comintern Congress gave a new impetus to searches for repulsing the war danger by joint efforts by the two Internationals.² On 26 September 1935 the Comintern Executive Committee appealed to the Secretariat of the Labour and Socialist International, stressing the need to join forces in the name of peace, in the name of averting the "terrible catastrophe into which the fascist criminals want to hurl mankind". The Comintern suggested immediately calling a joint conference of members of both Internationals and discussing the question of implementing the measures they had outlined for preserving peace.³

Despite the LSI leadership refusal, the Comintern did not stop trying to remove all barriers out of the way of attaining international joint action by the working class in the interests of peace and the anti-fascist struggle.

The policy of the Comintern and communist parties to draw into the anti-war movement the most diverse groups with various political views and religious convictions helped to broaden the anti-war movement. With the active backing of Communists the World Peace Congress took place successfully in Brussels from 3 to 6 September 1936 and the World Youth Congress in Geneva from 31 August to 6 September 1936. The Comintern Executive Committee based itself in its resolutions and practical activity on the need to involve in the peace movement the widest strata of the population and the broadest spectrum of pacifist, religious, youth, women's and cooperative organisations, and representatives of the colonies.⁴

An important step in strengthening international solidarity of anti-fascist and anti-war forces was vigorous joint action by workers from various countries against fascist Italy's attack on Abyssinia and in support of Soviet proposals to organise a collective rebuff to the aggressors.⁵

¹ 7th World Congress of the Communist International. *Resolutions...*, p. 43.

² For more detail, see K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, pp. 284-306.

³ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 48, 28 September 1935, Vol. 15, p. 1207, *L'Humanité*, 26 September 1935, see also *Pravda*, 27 September 1935.

⁴ For more detail, see *History of World War II 1939-1945*, Vol. 2. *On the Eve of War*, Moscow, 1974, p. 258; K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Fight Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, pp. 292-96 (both in Russian).

⁵ See G. Grunvald, *The MOPR in the Anti-War Struggle*, Moscow, 1936,

The desire for unity of all anti-imperialist forces found eloquent expression in the convocation of the European Conference in Aid of War Victims in Abyssinia, held in Paris in the spring of 1936 at which the most diverse political currents were present—Communists, Socialists, Democrats, pacifists, etc. There were more than 100 participants from France, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Spain, as well as German and Italian anti-fascists, envoys from Abyssinia and Haiti, Black Americans and representatives from the colonies.¹ International Red Aid and the Matteotti Fund also had attended the conference work.

With the civil war and the fascist powers' intervention in Spain, the Comintern time and again appealed for unity of all strains in the international labour movement. Comintern leaders regarded it of paramount importance to organise effective assistance to the Spanish people by healing the rift and reaching unity of action by the international proletariat against the common enemy—fascism. In a telegram to Palmiro Togliatti in October 1936 Dimitrov wrote, "We must vigorously continue the campaign for concerted action between the Second, the Amsterdam and the Communist Internationals to save the Spanish Republic... We must in no way be satisfied only with the simple registration of sabotage and refusal by socialist leaders, we have to conduct explanatory work even more energetically and persistently and fight hard for the international unity of the proletariat."²

The Comintern was the initiator of seven International Brigades joined by volunteers from sixty countries. Workers comprised their nucleus, Communists and Socialists their commanding personnel. Many eminent figures in the international labour and anti-fascist movement were commanders and commissars of the International Brigades, including Luigi Longo, Franz Dahlem, Ludwig Renn, Máté Zalka, Ralph Fox, Karol Swierczewski, Lazar Stern, Vladimir Čopić, Hans Beimler and Ferenc Münnich. Overcoming all the obstacles, more than 40,000 anti-fascists from various countries arrived in Spain and courageously fought at the most crucial sectors of the front. That was a real embodiment of international solidarity. "For Your and Our Freedom" was inscribed on the banner of the International Brigades.

p. 38; *International Workers' Solidarity in the Fight Against Fascism and the Launching of World War II (1933-1937)*, p. 316; A. I. Avrus, *The MOPR in the Fight Against Terror and Fascism, 1922-1939*, Saratov, 1976, p. 336 (all in Russian).

¹ See *International Workers' Solidarity in the Fight Against Fascism and the Launching of World War II (1933-1937)*, pp. 349-51; G. Grunvald, op. cit., p. 42; A. I. Avrus, op. cit., p. 236.

² See Georgi Dimitrov—*Outstanding Figure in the Communist Movement*, pp. 362-63.

The atmosphere in the international labour movement slowly but surely improved. In many countries worker rallies and mass meetings took place which adopted resolutions containing demands to establish concerted action between the Comintern and the LSI, between the Profintern and the Amsterdam Trade Union International. In New York, Paris, London, Geneva, Brussels, Stockholm, Prague and Amsterdam, as well as other cities of Europe and America, working people—Communists and Socialists, Liberals and Catholics—marched together in anti-war demonstrations and spoke from platforms of joint anti-war and anti-fascist rallies.

Those joint actions helped to improve relations between workers' parties. But it was not enough to form a powerful international movement capable of being an impenetrable barrier to aggressors and of forcing their secret and blatant accomplices to give up their ill-starred policy of appeasing the fascist aggressors. It has to be said that right-wing Socialists in many countries stubbornly spread the idea that effective sanctions against fascist Italy and Germany could only accelerate the onset of a second world war and that the best way to avert it was to sacrifice individual territories and even countries "for the sake of preserving peace". People are bound to see here a reason for the relative failure of proletarian actions against Italian aggression in Abyssinia, for the evasion of many influential social democratic parties from staunchly opposing German-Italian intervention in Spain and the aggression of militarist Japan in North China and, finally, the particular ease with which the aggressor states gained more and more concessions from governments of Western powers.

In striving to reduce the vigilance and playing up to the rabid anti-Sovietists and opponents of a united anti-fascist front in the West, the fascist rulers were waging a real psychological war against the USSR, the international communist movement and all revolutionaries, blaming them for undermining stability in the world.

The terrible danger shifted ever closer. Guernica in Spain symbolised the nightmare of impending war with the shooting of people in the name of the fascist New Order. Aware of their historic responsibility, the communist parties and the Comintern tirelessly fought to form a durable and invincible alliance of all anti-fascist forces, the binding principle of which could only be workers' unity. Life itself had demonstrated that where class solidarity triumphed among workers, fascism and reaction either had to retreat or met defeat.

The communist struggle to form an anti-war and anti-fascist front had truly historic significance. Its results were fully apparent in the mighty scope of the anti-fascist liberation movement during World War II.

IDEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

During the 1920s and 1930s the reformist strain within the international labour movement was represented by social democratic parties, most of which were members of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI). The LSI had 36 parties with 6,204,112 members and an electoral vote of 26.4 million in 1931.¹ Four congresses met during LSI activity. In May 1923 the LSI Founding Congress met in Hamburg; that was followed by the Second Congress in Marseilles in August 1925 which drew up a foreign policy programme and adopted decisions on combating reaction and defending workers' everyday requirements. The Third Congress in Brussels in August 1928 published an appeal "To Working People of the World" which set out the LSI position on urgent economic and political issues, approved the programme of combating militarism and on the colonial issue. The Fourth Congress which took place in Vienna in July 1931 worked out a programme of working for disarmament, in defence of democracy in Europe, and a resolution on measures to combat the economic crisis. The 1933 Paris LSI Conference adopted a decision on appealing for a fight against fascism. It was in effect from that time that LSI activity was paralysed by differences between the leading social democratic parties. On 3 April 1940 the Labour and Socialist International officially terminated activity.²

By contrast with the Comintern, the influence of which extended practically to all parts of the world, the LSI united mainly the social democratic parties of European countries. The eminent theorist of British Labourism, G.D.H.Cole, admitted that the social democratic

¹ *L'Internationale Socialiste (Supplément au Bulletin intérieur No. 94)*, Paris (n.d.), p. 23.

² See I. M. Krivoguz, *The Labour and Socialist International (1923-1940)*, Moscow, 1979 (in Russian).

movement "remained essentially European".¹ Only five non-European parties were members of the LSI: one from the USA and two from each Asia and Latin America. Their influence was insignificant both at home and within the LSI.

In the interwar period three trends remained as hitherto in the social democratic movement: right, centrist and left. At different times these trends alternatively dominated the parties, although on the whole the right wing prevailed, resting on the social democratic parties of Germany, Great Britain and Scandinavia, as well as in most countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Leaders of the socialist parties of France and Austria took a centrist stance. And only in Spain did the leader of the left wing, Largo Caballero, head the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party from 1932 to 1935.

Typical of the ideological-political stance of LSI parties was the gulf between officially proclaimed socialist objectives and opportunist practices. On the whole the evolution of social democracy is marked by attempts by its leaders to bridge the gap by adapting to the policy of the democratic wing of the bourgeoisie.

MOUNTING OPPORTUNIST TRENDS

At a time of temporary stabilisation of capitalism communist parties suffered harsh repression and mass worker actions were suppressed. At the same time, the ruling circles in many capitalist countries were forced to seek more active support from social democracy.

The opportunist leadership of social democracy counted on making some political capital both from the temporary lull in class struggle during the time of partial capitalist stabilisation and from the new bourgeois policy, precipitated by fear of the growing power of the revolutionary movement, of more active cooperation with social democratic leaders. Reformist leaders felt that their access to government and the state apparatus would substantially augment the arsenal of means of reinforcing social democratic influence and that they could win over some voters not only from Communists, but from bourgeois parties as well by proving their ability to manage capitalist affairs no worse than direct representatives of the bourgeoisie.

During the period of temporary stabilisation of capitalism, the *political-economic thinking* of social democracy became eclectic, enabling its proponents to make the most contradictory conclusions for political practice. LSI documents and those of many influential social democratic parties still contained references to Marx's ana-

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. 4, Part 2, *Communism and Social Democracy*, London, New York, 1958, p. 878.

lysis of capitalist contradictions and pointed out the need for class struggle and social emancipation of the working people. But the essence of the documents was abstract dogma divorced from reality. And investigation of specific economic processes relied primarily on bourgeois political economy.

LSI assessment of capitalist rationalisation was indicative of that. As a Third LSI Congress resolution states, "In the capitalist economy, rationalisation necessarily acquires two aspects: on the one hand it is a means of increasing labour productivity and constitutes technical progress in production; on the other, it is a means to enable capitalism to compensate for higher pay, reduction in the working day and development of social legislation by a progressive economy on manual workers and by aggravation of constraint exercised on workers in view of the more intensive labour."¹ It further admits that capitalist rationalisation is accompanied by unemployment. The draft resolution of the Fourth LSI Congress noted that "The working class is not against rationalisation itself, but against the distortions that it causes in the capitalist economic regime. The proletariat is demanding the right to participate in decision-making that affect its destiny, the equitable division of the fruits of rationalisation."²

The valid point about the need to prevent capital expropriating the fruits of scientific and technological progress was, nonetheless, too general, it left open the question of specific paths of struggle against the incursions of the bourgeoisie which was using technical and economic gains of rationalisation for instilling in people the idea that class contradictions were disappearing and that an era of "class peace" was at hand.

Right-wing social democratic leaders heartily welcomed capitalist rationalisation. One of SFIO leaders, Charles Spinasse, maintained that a social market regulated by society's "social objectives" rather than profit was forming under the effects of rationalisation to replace the capitalist market.³ Conversely, left-wingers, as well as such centrist leaders as Otto Bauer and Léon Blum, were giving a critical appraisal of capitalist rationalisation. As Blum wrote, "Science is developing and labour productivity is growing without limit, but if social relations remain basically unjust, by increasing wealth we are only increasing injustice. If the basis of distribution is unjust, injustice increases with growth in output of production that has to be distributed."⁴ From that general principle, Blum in-

¹ *Troisième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste, Bruxelles, 5-11 août 1928*, Vol. 2, Sections 5-9, Zurich, 1928, pp. IX. 19-IX.20.

² *Rapports présentés au Quatrième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste, Vienne, juillet 1931, par le Secrétariat de l'I.O.S.*, Zurich, 1931, p. 1.41.

³ *La vie socialiste*, No. 89, 1928, p. 6.

⁴ *La revue de Paris*, 20 May 1924.

ferred that rationalisation accelerated inner evolution that was to bring capitalism to social revolution. Rationalisation was the means for concentration and proletarianisation.

All social democratic leaders were agreed, however, about not attributing serious significance to theoretical differences on the character of rationalisation and capitalist development generally. That promoted their pragmatic, trade unionist approach which cleared the way for further strengthening of opportunist trends in the social democratic parties.

Rudolf Hilferding, leader and ideologist of the Social Democratic Party of Germany put forward the notion of "organised capitalism" which gained some popularity. In 1927, he maintained that development of state-monopoly regulation meant the "fundamental replacement of the capitalist free competition principle by the socialist principle of planned production".¹ He went on to say that organised capitalism retained contradictions engendering class struggle but, as he put it, in the new circumstances the contradictions would be overcome by evolutionary means of "converting a hierarchically-organised economy into a democratically-organised economy".² To resolve that task, he said, required a shift "from scientific to constructive socialism" by which the need for revolution would fall away.

To build socialism, he averred, it was sufficient "to transform... through conscious public regulation the capitalist organised and capitalist run economy into one run by the democratic state".³ He maintained that "the principle of struggle for factory and economic democracy is now paramount in the trade union movement", so therefore, "in the epoch of organised capitalism the socialist goal has grown out of the very development of the trade unions".⁴

In other words, the fight for socialism is reduced to extending state intervention in the economy and to customary trade union activity. In essence, Hilferding rejected the need for revolutionary transformation of the bourgeois state, suggesting confining oneself to augmenting "political democracy" supposedly already existing in the Weimar Republic, with "economic democracy".

Although in the 1920s the slogan of "economic democracy" was not yet universally recognised, it was actively utilised by right-wing social democratic leaders for ideologically justifying opportunism in politics.

¹ *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag 1927 in Kiel. Protokoll mit dem Bericht der Frauenkonferenz*, Berlin, 1927, p. 168.

² Rudolf Hilferding, "Probleme der Zeit", in *Die Gesellschaft*, Berlin, No. 1, April, 1924, p. 3.

³ Rudolf Hilferding, "Die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie in der Republik", *Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, Spandau, 1927, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The urge to separate the economic struggle from the ideological-political grew stronger amongst right-wing social democracy, and some right-wing leaders put to doubt, on occasions, the feasibility of general strikes. As the British Labour Party leader Ramsay MacDonald once publicly declared, "I don't like General Strikes."¹ The antagonism towards general strikes was justified by references to the ability to safeguard workers' economic interests more effectively by class collaboration and not by such means as strikes that cost society and the workers so dearly. In actual fact, social democratic leaders were afraid of the prospect of the strike struggle growing into mass political action and the impossibility of restraining that struggle to reformist bounds. It was such fears that essentially lay behind the hostility of the leadership of the Labour Party and TUC General Council to the 1926 general strike in Britain, which actually led to the strike ending on terms that meant the workers capitulating.² In other words, the reformist strategy of safeguarding workers' economic interests had become so dependent on bourgeois policy that the bourgeoisie, resorting to political means of resolving economic conflicts in its own interests, not only met no resistance from reformist leaders, but was even able to count on their cooperation.

The policy pursued by social democratic leaders increasingly inclined towards seeing their activity in parliament and government, pacts with employers and government agencies, as the principal means of safeguarding workers' economic interests. The narrowly trade unionist approach of reformist leaders to defending the everyday workers' demands and their efforts to damp down the mass economic struggle weakened the working class's fighting capacity and its position in contending with the capitalist state.

At a time when class struggle was on the wane this flaw in reformist policy was not so apparent. Furthermore, the social reforms implemented in a number of countries created an exaggerated idea of the possibilities of reformist policy. As a result, there were no glaring differences within the social democratic movement over issues of economic struggle.

It was a different situation on the level of political struggle. The turn of most social democratic leaders towards collaboration with bourgeois parties on a governmental level, which took place as class struggle declined, vividly demonstrated the link between the class collaboration policy and the onset of reaction. That provoked some anger among ordinary Social Democrats at the opportunism of their leaders. It was precisely the question of *collaboration with*

¹ See R. Page Arnot, *The Miners: Years of Struggle. A History of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (from 1910 onwards)*, London, 1953, p. 430.

² For more detail see Chapter 4 of this volume.

the bourgeoisie on a governmental level that became the subject of most heated dispute within LSI parties.

Back at the turn of the century, during debate on the Millerand Case, a right-wing tendency emerged in the social democratic movement that viewed any entry of Social Democrats into government as a partial gaining of power by the proletariat. Accordingly, gaining most seats in parliament and forming a social-democratic government would ensure a shift of political power to the proletariat.

Up to World War I most Second International leaders opposed the "parliamentary road to socialism". The participation of right-wing socialist leaders in bourgeois governments in wartime evinced sharp protest from left-wingers. As social chauvinism became discredited in the people's eyes, both left-wingers and centrists began to come out against taking part in bourgeois governments. But the stance of centrist leaders was inconsistent; they did not suggest opting for mass revolutionary struggle as the main strategic orientation. The centrists held that "parliamentary rules of the game" were unable to ensure political conditions for transition to socialism; yet they actually provided no other alternative. While reproaching right-wing Socialists for ignoring the importance of mass struggle, centrist leaders were afraid to subordinate or even closely tie parliamentary activity to mass struggle. Disagreements on that question had not been overcome at the Founding LSI Congress and the issue remained open. That situation was advantageous to the right-wing leaders. The chief ally of the right wing was the opportunist practice of social democratic party leaders, in which parliamentary activity actually took the central place, subordinating all other areas of work to it. Of the big LSI parties only the French Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria did not take part in governments between 1924 and 1929.

Parliamentary socialism sank deep roots in the political practice of social democratic parties, especially in countries like Britain and Sweden in whose labour movements Marxist traditions were comparatively weak. The Labour Party leadership made no bones about its rejection of Marxism and revolution. As MacDonald put it, "I assume the Parliamentary method and reject Communism."¹ This phrase just about sums up the whole political philosophy of the right wing of social democracy.

From MacDonald's viewpoint, the advantage of parliamentary democracy was that it rejected direct democracy, did not permit the masses to gain control of the state. Claiming that the masses were ignorant and incapable of running the state, MacDonald concluded that "It may seem, therefore, sheer folly and perversity to allow this

¹ J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Parliament and Democracy*, London, 1920, p. VIII.

mass to pass important political judgments upon the highest and most complicated matters of State, and to exercise power over affairs that are very remote from its everyday experience." He saw the advantage of parliamentarism precisely in that it did not commit such "follies". "The truth is that the representative institution produces its own trained workmen. A crowd of people with no expert knowledge and no training in capacity to govern can nevertheless secure liberty for itself, and safety and honour for its community through its representative institutions, provided that some appreciable percentage of it understands the language of liberty, safety and honour, and that that language finds a way of intelligence."¹ Naturally, there was nothing socialist about the activity of the first Labour government and it fully justified the description of the Labour Party as "a moderate working-class wing of British Liberalism".²

In the countries of continental Europe where considerable numbers of working people had no trust in direct apologetics for the bourgeois state, social democratic leaders felt a need for other, more flexible conceptions that justified the need for Social Democrats to take part in bourgeois governments.

Karl Kautsky responded to that need. Verbally he certainly distanced himself from the parliamentary road to socialism. "Parliamentarism," he wrote, "will always disappoint those Socialists who would like parliament to carry out a revolution in their stead, without making it necessary for the proletariat to wage an extra-parliamentary struggle to promote their forces and gain power."³ While MacDonald explained parliamentarism's shortcomings by the ignorance of the mass of people, Kautsky was writing that "The bourgeoisie has become conservative. Thence the fruitlessness of parliament."⁴

That pronouncement, however, was practically the only verbal pass at Marxist tradition or the workers' revolutionary sentiments, in so far as Kautsky was really approving social democratic participation in bourgeois governments on any terms and their orientation primarily on parliamentary activity. He claimed that a state of class equilibrium had arrived "when the proletariat is not yet strong enough to take political power wholly for itself, but is already strong enough to prevent any bourgeois party from retaining power in the face of working class opposition".⁵ In such conditions Social-

¹ J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism: Critical and Constructive*, London, 1924, p. 224.

² Adolf Sturmthal, *The Tragedy of European Labor. 1918-1939*, New York, 1943, p. 104.

³ Karl Kautsky, *Die proletarische Revolution und ihr Programm*, Stuttgart, 1922, pp. 133-34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

lists, in Kautsky's view, were obliged to take part in a bourgeois government. His arguments on the need to take account of the line-up of class forces and preparation for revolution, only gave a Marxist colouring to the idea of a coalition government, without really compelling social democratic leaders to use governmental power for revolutionary ends. Reference to the danger of civil war gave an early justification to opportunist behaviour of Social Democrats in government.

In practice, however, it was impossible to combine Marxist convictions and popular revolutionary sentiment with opportunist policy.

The activity of coalition governments did not smooth the way for revolution, as Kautsky had promised, nor the political advancement of the working class. Social democratic parties wholly adopted the parliamentary rules of the game with all their consequences. Their participation in government was unable to avert the steady rightward lurch of the political axis in most capitalist countries.

It is hardly surprising that the results of government activity by social democratic leaders should produce disillusion among the social democratic masses and even alarm at the fate of the socialist movement and democracy. That explains the fact that collaboration with the bourgeoisie on a governmental level did not gain the official seal of approval in LSI documents. The French Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria worked particularly vigorously against such ratification.

The concept of "exercising" and "winning" power, put forward by the French socialist leader Léon Blum, was the theoretical basis of the stance taken by social democratic opponents to the idea of a "coalition" government. Though not a Marxist, Blum was more to the left than Kautsky on the paramount political issue. What is more, at the end of the 1920s and start of the 1930s, he was fighting against "neo-Socialists" who advocated an open break with Marxism, while Kautsky was actually supporting the "neo-Socialists" against Blum.¹ The coming together of Kautsky's positions and those of open active foes of Marxism was in itself symbolic, testifying that even formal recognition of Marxism was becoming oppressive to the SPD leadership.

Blum's views reflected the peculiar nature of the ideological-political evolution of the French Socialist Party determined, on the one hand, by the militant traditions of the French proletariat and, on the other, by the fact that French opportunism had not reached such a degree of maturity as German opportunism, since the former's

¹ See, for example, *La vie socialiste*, No. 172, 11 January 1930, p. 6.

leaders had not had to act as stiflers of revolution as had happened in Germany.¹

By advancing the concept of "exercising" and "winning" power, Blum was trying theoretically to justify the policy of non-participation in bourgeois governments and to outline the main contours of a future strategy of winning political power. Blum was voicing support for revolution and proletarian dictatorship.² "History teaches us," he wrote, "that any political revolution—i.e., the transition from one political system to another, is almost always bound up with what I would call the absence of legality: old institutions are overthrown while the new ones are not yet able to operate. Those periods of lack of legality by their nature are periods of dictatorship... We foresee that social revolution will be confronted by that same practical necessity, and that is why we think proletarian dictatorship an almost inevitable consequence of proletarian revolution."³

Pointing out the fundamental difference between purely parliamentary means of Socialists entering government and the revolutionary winning of political power, Blum wrote, "The winning of power is full seizure of political power, the possible prelude and necessary condition for transforming property relations—i.e., revolution ... I would counterpose exercise of power to the winning of power in conditions of the bourgeois system which does not bear a revolutionary character and which is a consequence of parliamentary activity itself."⁴

As a result of Socialists gaining most seats in parliament or altering the balance of power within it, Socialists can be obliged to form a socialist government which, however, may be unable to implement a socialist programme owing to the lack of other necessary social and political conditions. That is, in Blum's formulation, a typical case of "exercising" power. By agreeing to "exercise" power, Socialists, however, find themselves in difficulties. In a situation when the people "will expect from exercise of power results which only the winning of power can bring them"⁵ the reformist nature of socialist government action will cause dissatisfaction among the people and lead to a decline in the socialist party's influence.

Besides "exercise" of power Socialists may be faced with the possibility of taking part in a coalition government. Calling it simple

¹ See S. S. Salychev, *The French Socialist Party Between the Wars, 1921-1940*, Moscow, 1973 (in Russian); D. Blumé, R. Bourderon et al., *Histoire du réformisme en France depuis 1920*, Vol. 1, Paris, 1976.

² Léon Blum, *Radicalisme et socialisme*, Paris, 1928, pp. 7, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *La nouvelle revue socialiste*, No. 3, 1928, p. 23.

⁵ Léon Blum, *L'exercice du pouvoir*, Paris, 1937, p. 322.

participation in government, Blum wrote, "in participation I see the same problems [as with "exercise" of power.—*Ed.*], but I do not see analogical advantages that compensate them".¹ In that case, too, the fact of Socialists entering government will be perceived by the people as the winning of power, while Socialists will have far fewer opportunities for carrying through reforms in the workers' interests as in the case of "exercising" power. On the basis of those arguments, Blum underlined that Socialists cannot steer away from "exercising" power; they must, as a rule, avoid straightforward participation in government.²

Léon Blum's ideas were fairly widespread among Social Democrats internationally. Blum's criticism of "the parliamentary road to socialism", his arguments on the impossibility of winning political power without revolution and proletarian dictatorship were of positive significance. In counterdistinction to many influential LSI leaders who overestimated the importance of Socialists in government, Blum quite rightly noted the limited, purely reformist nature of such participation.

All the same, Blum's arguments contained all the weaknesses inherent in the centrists. Admiration for the bourgeois state that was deep-seated in the social democratic movement certainly told on all his work.

Recognising the need for the destructive, coercive function of the revolutionary masses, Blum did not believe in their creative endeavour. He allowed for their primary role in bringing down the old system but not in building a new, socialist society.

As a result revolution acquired a fairly gloomy outlook in his interpretation. Revolutionary power that calls on the people to fight to bring down the old system comes into conflict with the masses as soon as it shifts to build the new socialist society. In other words, revolutionary power, by confining the rights of the overthrown classes, also restricts the rights of the mass of people, and that invariably leads revolution to defeat: by taking the path of restricting the people's rights, revolutionary power is deprived of its main prop in fighting the overthrown classes which will continue to be stronger than it for some time to come. Blum boldly resorted to revolutionary formulas and concepts, but every time retreated before the need to draw revolutionary conclusions for political practice.

Having posed the question of contradiction between revolutionary goals and reformist policy of social democratic parties, Blum did not resolve the contradiction, he simply suggested postponing it

¹ *La nouvelle revue socialiste*, No. 3, 1926, p. 27.

² Blum allowed for exceptions only in extreme circumstances created either by external threat or an offensive by ultra-right forces (*L'Oeuvre de Léon Blum, 1934-1937*, Paris, 1964, p. 196).

until Socialists took part in government. Meanwhile, in that event the rift between manifesto positions and political practice of the socialist party would become particularly wide. The party comes up against a dilemma: whether to withdraw its revolutionary slogans, or to overcome the limitations of reformist policy. In actual fact Blum was inclined towards the first. Criticising some of the more odious aspects of opportunist policy Blum, like other leaders of the centrist tendency, did not waver from the reformist road.

Contradictions between centrist and right-wing tendencies in social democratic parties frequently took on an acute polemic. But at a time when capitalism was provisionally stable, when class struggle was generally on the wane and deep-going anti-communist sentiments were present among the centrists, differences in the social democratic movement were overcome mainly by a further rightward shift of the ideological-political positions of the centrist tendency.

It should be noted that while heated discussions were still going on concerning Social Democrats taking part in government and the rightists were unable to impose their viewpoint, the right wing of social democracy was more successful in advancing its views on such prime issues as *assessment of reactionary trends in bourgeois policy* and ways to combat them, and *attitudes towards the communist movement*.

Although the growth of reactionary trends in bourgeois policy caused some alarm among Social Democrats, reflected particularly in the LSI Hamburg Congress declaration on the bourgeoisie's conversion into the main source of reaction, the popular mood did not have any radical effect on the political practice of the social democratic parties. Inasmuch as the social democratic leadership preferred the reformist policy of collaborating with bourgeois parties to the prospect of revolutionary development that scared it so much, the thesis that the bourgeoisie was becoming the main source of reaction remained purely declarative. At the Third LSI Congress, Emile Vandervelde branded fascism a product of the economic and political backwardness of capitalist countries, declaring, "There is nothing new but the word in fascism. It is a *boulangisme* that has succeeded, a *bonapartisme*."¹

Bourgeois encouragement of fascism was said to be a chance affair, a manifestation of the short-sightedness of certain of its factions. "The Italian bourgeoisie," said Filippo Turati, leader of the Italian Socialists, "favoured the victory of fascism. It is repenting, but too late... Fascism would like to live for itself alone, above and against

¹ *Troisième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*, Vol. 2, Parts V-IX p. VI.19.

² *Ibid.*, p. VI.52.

all classes, in the service of one single political class that it is forming."¹ In portraying a picture of the repentent bourgeoisie, Turati went so far as to make insinuations about communism. "Fascism," he claims, "is a real Bolshevism in the service of all forms of reaction. It aids communism while combating it so as to secure an alibi in the eyes of the *gogos*."²

The heroes of the anti-fascist underground were said to be in cahoots with fascism, while the bourgeois pillars of the fascist regime were proclaimed as potential allies in the anti-fascist struggle! And no matter how detestable the views of Turati, they were in tune with the arguments of Vandervelde and other anti-communist social democratic leaders, which was fully reflected in the Third LSI Congress resolutions. One of them read in part: "With all its power the International is against dictatorship of a sect or any person no matter what the form of that dictatorship."³ That condemnation applied not only to fascist regimes, but to the Soviet political system which was described as "dictatorship by a terrorist minority".⁴

The calumnious identification of communism with fascism could not be explained merely by the effect of bourgeois propaganda, by the bitterness caused by the rift in the labour movement or merely by genuine error. The conscious urge of right-wing social democratic leaders to discredit any revolutionary action through anti-communism and to convince the people that class collaboration was compatible with defence of democracy certainly had a decisive role to play.

At LSI congresses, from parliamentary tribunes and in the media the social democratic leaders invariably drew attention to the need of combating reaction, to the predatory nature of the Versailles Treaty; they condemned the aggressive designs of imperialism, and protested at the colonial war of French imperialism in Morocco, at American intervention in Nicaragua and at the imperialist policy of the USA and West European countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Yet on the attitude towards the mass movement the social democratic leaders invariably found themselves in the same camp as bourgeois politicians. In rejecting mass struggle, they tried to convince the workers that the bourgeois-democratic state had sufficient means of bridling fascist reaction. In line with that argument the liberal bourgeoisie was said to be the working class's principal ally in the fight against fascism while the Communists were the foes of democracy.

¹ *Troisième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*, p. VI. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. VI.54.

³ *Ibid.*, p. IX.6.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Anti-communism, intensifying the lack of confidence typical of reformists in mass political struggle, was used also as a mask for the policy of damping it down, isolating the masses from active participation in "big-time politics".

The Labour and Socialist International spoke up in favour of healing the "fateful rift".¹ Many prominent social democratic leaders stressed that differences between Communists and Social Democrats did not exceed the bounds of the labour movement.²

It was all very different in practice however. Suffice it to recall the attitude of social democratic leaders to the united workers' front. The communist-advanced proposal for a united front, and communist efforts in Germany, France, Italy and other countries established viable conditions for all workers' forces to come together.³ Social democratic leaders made no use of those opportunities and generally refused even to contemplate them.

During the years of temporary partial stabilisation of capitalism opportunist and anti-communist trends became stronger in the social democratic movement. The policy of collaborating with bourgeois parties and anti-communism comprised a common platform uniting all strains of social democracy on the terms of its right wing. Bourgeois parties for their part undertook all measures to suppress any possibility of Communists and Social Democrats coming together. From the very outset anti-communism was that coinage in which social democratic leaders paid for obtaining wider opportunities for political action within the frameworks of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. The reformist ideas of the social democratic leadership combined with anti-communism seriously disoriented the masses.

The face of social democratic parties changed accordingly; they increasingly turned into a mechanism for winning over the electorate. The link between social democratic parties and parliament and all bourgeois-democratic institutions grew stronger, but their capacity to organise mass political struggle sharply fell, and, consequently, so did action independent of bourgeois policy. Social democracy paid for its success by mounting dependence on the bourgeoisie. The woeful consequences of that dependence were to show later when capitalism entered a series of economic crises, the class struggle worsened and that dependence disarmed the labour movement in the face of fascist danger.

¹ *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in Hamburg 21. bis 25. Mai 1923*, Berlin, 1923, p. 102.

² *SFIO. 18-e Congrès National tenu à Tours, Decembre 1920, Compte Rendu Sténographique*, Paris, 1921, p. 275.

³ See *Die Kommunistische Internationale, Kurzer historischer Abriss*, Berlin, 1970; Y. L. Molchanov, *The Comintern: At the Source of the United Proletarian Front Policy*, Moscow, 1969 (in Russian).

FACING CRISIS AND FASCIST DANGER

The world economic crisis that had started in the late 1920s caught the social democratic leaders unawares, since they had not foreseen any sharp change in the situation.¹ That also demonstrated the gap between the theory and practice of social democracy. Exposures of contradictions in capitalist production and indications of the inevitability of economic crises which did exist in the documents of social democratic parties had a purely propagandist meaning, while social democratic policy was designed to safeguard workers' interests while maintaining favourable economic situation through adapting to bourgeois policy. As François Gaucher wrote, "When you analyse this conviction [the Marxist theory of surplus value.—*Ed.*], you will see that it constitutes a powerful myth drawing the masses into action, but it does not prevent certain socialist economists from preferring the theory of final utility or any other more eclectic conception."²

Right-wing social democratic ideologists understood only the thought of possible extended capitalist reproduction and interpreted Marxist criticism of Sismondi's theory of economic crises in such a way as to prove the possibility of crisis-free capitalist development, of capitalism overcoming its major contradictions itself and growing into socialism. Some left-wing social democratic ideologists, on the other hand, were inclined to make an absolute out of economic contradictions in capitalism putting forward the idea of the inevitable automatic demise of the capitalist economy under the burden of its contradictions. What attracted them to this notion was the clearly-expressed idea that capitalist contradictions were unsolvable; and that intensified propaganda of socialist objectives.

Frequently one and the same social democratic theorists, depending on the changing situation, propagated either one or the other idea. For example, in his early days Karl Kautsky professed the view that it was impossible to market all output in the sphere of capitalist production and that non-capitalist markets were needed for it.³ And yet when capitalism entered a period of temporary stabilisation, he supported Hilferding's theory of "organised capitalism" which was based on the idea of a possible crisis-free development of capitalism and its peaceful growing into socialism.

Somewhat later Lucien Laurat, a SFIO ideologist, followed a similar path: he had begun by putting about the idea of capitalism's automatic disintegration, but he soon found himself in the ranks of

¹ François Gaucher, *Contribution à l'Histoire du Socialisme Français (1905-1939)*, Paris, 1934, p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³ *Neue Zeit*, No. 3 (29), 1902, p. 80.

those who subscribed to the idea of the peaceful growing of capitalism into socialism. He wrote in 1939, "The transformation of the economy and society in the socialist sense has commenced... Traditional capitalism is dying."¹

On the other hand, another French socialist leader and ideologist, Jules Moch, went the other way. While capitalism was temporarily stable, he was claiming that rationalisation was enabling capitalism to overcome its major contradictions, but with the onset of economic crisis he stood by the idea that extended capitalist reproduction was only feasible if, "besides the capitalist economic sector ... there exist others not based on that generalised exploitation: rural, artisan, colonial, etc."²

The rushing between two apparently mutually-exclusive conceptions was hardly coincidental. Both notions had a profound inner kinship. The idea of social fatalism entrenched within them reflected lack of faith in the determining role of revolutionary action by the proletariat in transforming society. In both cases the principal role was ascribed to objective economic processes in bringing down capitalism while the labour movement's task was confined to adapting to that economic development.

When capitalism was temporarily stable, most social democratic leaders did not reject the principles of bourgeois economic policy, confining themselves to taking workers' economic interests more into account in implementing that policy. When things were looking up economically that social democratic policy still left certain possibilities for safeguarding the everyday interests of the working people. But with the onset of economic crisis the situation changed radically.

The role within bourgeois policy of methods of diktat and outright coercion rose sharply, and the bourgeois urge to use political power for imposing the bourgeois way out of the crisis at the workers' expense intensified. In the new circumstances the course to adapting to the bourgeoisie's economic policy increasingly drew social democratic leaders into direct conflict with the workers and unions. It was just such a conflict that the second British Labour government (1929-1931) ran into. The anti-worker nature of the government programme was so obvious that even the reformist leaders of the TUC had to oppose the government. The Labour Party even rejected the government programme, and MacDonald and several of his ministers who refused to toe the party line left the party. As G.D.H. Cole says, however, most Labour Party leaders were very loathe to break with MacDonald since it meant refuting a policy "which was, after all, no more than the logical outcome of what they

¹ Lucien Laurat, *Le marxisme en faillite? Du marxisme de Marx au marxisme d'aujourd'hui?*, Paris, 1939, pp. 236-37.

² Jules Moch, *Capitalisme et Transports*, Paris, 1931, p. 232.

had been doing during their previous tenure of office".¹ As Cole went on to say, "they were without an alternative policy to that which they had rejected".² In other words, at a time of crisis any active steps within the bounds of social democratic policy would have given bourgeois solutions, and inaction remained the only means of not compromising themselves, not violating the solemnly-proclaimed goals of the social democratic movement. The German Social Democrat Fritz Naphtali asserted: "I do not believe that we can do very much or attain anything decisive from the viewpoint of economic policy for overcoming the crisis before it ends... Correction measures ... must be taken not during crisis, but at a time of prosperity."³

His cynical demarche from defending workers' interests at a time when the going for them was hardest could not become the official stance of social democratic parties without the risk of a break with the unions. At the same time the social democratic leadership was not ready to combat the bourgeois way of dealing with the crisis. At the Fourth LSI Congress in July 1931 the social democratic leaders lost their heads completely when faced with the unexpected turn in socio-political development. The Secretariat's report and Congress decisions described the economic crisis afflicting capitalist states as a normal cyclical crisis; and they did not contain one iota of analysis into its peculiarities. True, the Congress decisions rejected the bourgeois way out of the crisis through reducing workers' consumption. The draft resolution prepared for the Fourth LSI Congress emphasised, "if we wish to surmount the economic crisis, it is imperative to increase the people's purchasing power".⁴ As measures for tackling the crisis, the LSI proposed raising workers' pay, shortening the working day and introducing paid holidays, unemployment benefits, etc. Yet the LSI ignored the fact that at the time of crisis the effectiveness of parliamentary activity had sharply fallen in safeguarding the workers' economic interests, that the struggle on ways of overcoming the crisis now had a political character and the outcome of that struggle ultimately depended on the nature of political power.

Class instinct prompted social democratic workers to believe that they could defend their exit from economic crisis only by revolutionary mass struggle. Reflecting just such a mood, the left wing of social democracy inclined to a position where only extra-parlia-

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos*, London, 1932, p. 611.

² *Ibid.*

³ Fritz Naphtali, *Wirtschaftskrise und Arbeitslosigkeit*, Berlin, 1930, p. 24.

⁴ *Rapports présentés au Quatrième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste...*, p. I.36.

mentary mass struggle could enable the working class to put the necessary pressure on in favour of an economic policy taking workers' interests into consideration. As an authoritative left social democratic leader, Jean Zyromski, put it, "In our opinion, capital dictatorship can be distinguished behind the façade of democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism, and that idea compels socialist parties to preserve or restore a political strategy based on harmonised and internationally agreed class action."¹ Indicating the class nature of the bourgeois-democratic state, he underlined, "We suppose that ... to change the state and the existing balance of power we must initially destroy the very foundations of the class state, the capitalist state."²

Consistent realisation of the left-wing social democratic recommendation presupposed launching mass struggle and establishing cooperation with Communists. But that was hampered by the deep-seated opportunist fear of mass struggle and anti-communist policy inherent in the social democratic movement. Even the proposals of left-wing Social Democrats went no further than using mass struggle as a means of putting pressure on the bourgeois-democratic state and its institutions.

The sentiments that dominated LSI ruling groups were most fully reflected in the words of the union leader Fritz Tarnow at the SPD Congress in 1931, "Nowadays we stand at the sickbed of capitalism not merely as a diagnostician, but also—yes, this is the point—as a doctor who wants to cure, or as a joyful inheritor who cannot wait for the end and would be delighted to help the patient on his way with poison. The whole of our situation is present in that picture. We, as I understand it, are destined to be both doctor who seriously wishes to cure the patient, and at the same time to retain the sense that we are the inheritor who today more readily than tomorrow would take possession of the whole inheritance of the capitalist system. That dual role—of doctor and inheritor—is a darn difficult task. We could avoid many disputes in the party if we always consciously remained in that dual role."³ That reference to the role of inheritor was actually a tribute to the revolutionary past of social democracy, while in the 1930s social democratic leaders preferred to play the part of saviour of capitalism, which paralysed social democratic policy in the exceedingly harsh period for the working class.

The scale and depth of economic crisis were such that for the first time capitalism was unable to count on automatically emerging

¹ *La bataille socialiste*, No. 48, 1931, p. 8.

² *SFIO. XXVII-e Congrès national. Compte-rendu sténographique*, Paris, 1930, p. 390.

³ *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Leipzig 1931 vom 31. Mai bis 5. Juni im Volkshaus. Protokoll*, Berlin, 1931, p. 45.

from it. The state's extensive intervention in regulating economic and social relations was becoming the decisive condition for overcoming the economic crisis.

At the same time, the entire system and ideology of private enterprise that made the state merely a nightwatchman rose up against state economic intervention which it saw as a threat to democracy. In countries like the USA and Great Britain where the bourgeoisie still possessed considerable economic and socio-political resources, the bourgeois-democratic state succeeded in finding ways to overcome the economic difficulties. On the other hand, in several countries the means at the disposal of the bourgeois-democratic state turned out to be insufficient and growth in state intervention in the economy was accompanied by the development of authoritarian and fascist tendencies in bourgeois policy.

The hopes of social democratic leaders that they would manage to subordinate the bourgeois-democratic state to the goals of their movement were illusory. In fact the opposite occurred. As Otto Bauer put it, "Social democracy became, admittedly to a differing degree in different countries, a prop for bourgeois democracy, an important ingredient in its political and social system."¹

In so far as the bourgeois-democratic state and its institutions were unable to bar the way to fascism, only popular revolutionary struggle could fulfil that task. Meanwhile, social democracy was not ready for that sort of struggle. What told was not only the negative attitude of the leaders to mass political struggle, but also lack of faith in the ability of social democratic rank-and-file to rise to such struggle. For many years the leaders had been advocating winning electoral support as the main political objective. That in turn encouraged them to play down the difficulties and obstacles in the way of revolutionary struggle for power. Although this tactics helped to win votes, at the same time it reduced the fighting capacity of the people following social democracy. The leadership put great store in their propaganda arsenal by anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. The leaders of social democracy claimed that Soviet power had destroyed the old economic system yet was unable to build a new one and that the fight against the communist movement stemmed from concern for defending democracy.

With the onset of economic crisis and the growth of fascist danger those arguments turned against their authors. During the 1930s the Soviet economy remained a lonely oasis that was untouched by the economic storm raging in the world. Even bourgeois economists were talking of the advantages of a planned socialist economy insured

¹ Otto Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen? Die Krise der Weltwirtschaft, der Demokratie und des Sozialismus*, Bratislava, 1936, p. 298.

against crises. On the other hand, as the fascist danger mounted myths about the communist threat to democracy became palpably obvious. Moreover, Social Democrats simply had to appreciate the clear advantages of communist anti-fascist strategy. G.D.H. Cole wrote in 1937 that "Communists ... regard the experience of Italy, of Germany, of Austria, and now of Spain, as sufficient proof that capitalism will nowhere cede place to Socialism without invoking violence in the hope of shattering the Socialist movement to pieces. Even those who still echo 'It can't happen here', can hardly deny that the case for the opposite view is unpleasantly strong."¹

Indicative in that respect was the book published in 1936 by the centrist social democratic leader Otto Bauer, *Between Two World Wars? The Crisis of the World Economy, Democracy and Socialism* in which he actually admitted, though with numerous reservations, the historical veracity of the communist movement.

Bauer gave a grim assessment of social democratic activity: "Reformist socialism believes that the working class could steadily and constantly increase its authority within bourgeois democracy, steadily and constantly gaining further concessions from bourgeois democracy, steadily and constantly giving the form of democracy a socialist content, step by step transforming capitalist organisation of society into socialist, without breaking democracy, steadily and constantly promoting bourgeois democracy into socialist. History refutes that illusion."²

Bauer called on the social democratic movement fundamentally to reshape its policy, stressing, "The paramount fact of postwar history—that of the invincible development of socialism in the USSR—must primarily stand at the centre of the working class's concept of history."³

While making that comparison, however, he recommended casting out not only "democratic socialism", but communist views as well, and working out "integral socialism".⁴

He was opposed to the definition of fascism widely popular in social democratic parties as a petty-bourgeois movement. "If the fascist movement turned mainly into a mass movement of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, it only came to power because the capitalist class had decided to use it for suppressing the working class."⁵ Coming out strongly against attempts to invest in fascism the trim-

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *The People's Front*, London, 1937, p. 55.

² Otto Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen?*, p. 193.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 312-36.

⁵ O. Bauer, H. Marcuse, A. Rosenberg, *Faschismus und Kapitalismus. Theorien über die sozialen Ursprünge und die Funktion des Faschismus*, Frankfurt. 1967, p. 149.

nings of a popular movement, he said that German fascism "receives orders from aggressive magnates of German heavy industry and is led by hirelings of German reaction."¹ Bauer saw the very fact of the bourgeoisie turning to openly terrorist methods as a symptom that the political domination of the bourgeoisie had run out of steam.

From that assessment of fascism, Bauer came to the conclusion that social democracy needed to pursue a policy of uniting all workers and democratic forces into a single anti-fascist front, and above all of achieving cooperation between Social Democrats and Communists. While differences on ways of fighting for socialism had caused a rift in the socialist movement, on the question of combating fascism the goals of Social Democrats and Communists, Bauer wrote, were common. For that reason, he thought that Social Democrats should respond positively to communist appeals for organising joint anti-fascist struggle.

All the same Bauer could not understand that fascism, being a negation of bourgeois democracy, was at the same time also a product of the disintegration of bourgeois democracy. Referring to reasons for the origins of fascism, he wrote "The class of capitalists and big landowners has given state power to fascist groups not so as to ... suppress a certain revolutionary socialism, but to destroy the achievements of reformist socialism... Fascist dictatorship therefore arises as a result of a peculiar balance of class forces. On the one hand stands the bourgeoisie... The economic crisis has destroyed the profits of that bourgeoisie. Democratic institutions do not allow it widely to impose its will on the proletariat so as to restore its profits... Democratic law and order make it too weak to suppress the proletariat through law and the legitimate state apparatus. But the bourgeoisie is strong enough to pay for the upkeep of an illegal and unlawful private army for fighting the working class. On the other hand stands the working class headed by reformist socialism and trade unions."²

In line with the scheme outlined by Bauer, the main foe of the bourgeoisie that relies on fascism is reformist socialism in alliance with the bourgeois-democratic state. The conclusion is not at all what one might expect bearing in mind his grim assessment of the results of reformist socialist activity. In that case Bauer was unable to free himself from bourgeois-democratic prejudices that saw revolution and democracy as incompatible.

Yet once he admitted that the bourgeoisie had become the main source of reaction, he could hardly remain on Marxist grounds or any class analysis in believing that the bourgeois-democratic state

¹ *Vierter Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale, Wien, 25. Juli bis 1. August 1931. Berichte und Verhandlungen*, Zurich, 1932, p. 521.

² O. Bauer, H. Marcuse, A. Rosenberg, op. cit., pp. 154-55.

and its supporters were manifesting the same fighting capacity against fascism as they had done against feudal reaction. He depicted bourgeois democracy merely as a victim of fascism, while the class parochialism of bourgeois democracy was a factor facilitating the victory of fascism in a number of countries.

Anti-fascist struggle was a new type of democratic struggle in the course of which a new alignment of socio-political forces came about. Bourgeois democracy and bourgeois champions of democracy were opposing fascism, yet they were not consistent in that struggle, inasmuch as they did not reject the main goal of fascism—suppression of revolutionary forces so as to bolster the bourgeois domination. For that reason the main burden of anti-fascist struggle lay on the shoulders of the revolutionary proletariat.

Left-wingers and some centrists came half-way to that conclusion by analysing the changing terms of struggle.

Since the time of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, the labour movement had manifested disagreement on the question of working class hegemony in bourgeois-democratic revolution and generally in democratic struggle. Although experience of the Russian revolutions convincingly confirmed the profound truth of Lenin's teaching on proletarian hegemony in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, reformist social democratic leaders followed the Mensheviks in invariably giving the working class a subordinate role in the democratic movement. In remaining true to that reformist tradition, the great bulk of social democratic leaders continued to think that the bourgeois state and its institutions should play the main part in the anti-fascist struggle as well, while the mass struggle headed by the working class was to play an auxiliary role.

Lack of faith in mass struggle was also the principal shortcoming of the policy of many Social Democrats who began to appreciate the need for cooperation with Communists.

On the other hand, dogmatic adherence to a reformist scheme of alignment of forces in the democratic struggle also engendered leftist political conclusions. For example, the very fact of the working class becoming the leader in the anti-fascist struggle served as the grounds for leftist and centrist leaders to proclaim socialist slogans as direct objectives of the labour movement. In 1931, for instance, the left-wing Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (SAPD) stressed that only the overthrow of capitalism would make it possible to come through the economic crisis; they declared socialism to be the "direct day-to-day objective of our time".¹ This thesis was adopted by a large part of left-wing and even centrist Social Democrats. As a

¹ Hanno Drechsler, *Die Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SAPD). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung am Ende der Weimarer Republik*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1965, p. 113.

resolution of the Toulouse Congress of the French Socialist Party in 1934 stated, "Today the choice between fascism and democracy means a choice between fascism and socialism."¹

Largo Caballero, leader of the left wing of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, and his supporters expressed a similar viewpoint in a sectarian form. The draft programme of the PSOE proposed by the Madrid federation said the following: "The proletariat should not agree to the need to safeguard bourgeois democracy, but is bound to win political power by all possible means so as to achieve, with its help, its own socialist revolution and humanitarian all-round democracy—that is, classless democracy."² They thereby underplayed the anti-fascist potential of non-proletarian strata.

Such ideas hampered the formation of a united anti-fascist front; the experience of revolution and national revolutionary war in Spain, as well as the Popular Front in France went to confirm that.

In 1936 leaders of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party gave way to popular pressure and had to join the Popular Front uniting bourgeois proponents of the Republic along with Socialists and Communists.

The party had no single view on Popular Front policy. In 1936 the influence of the right-wing leader Julian Besteiro and his supporters who opposed the Popular Front was insignificant. The centrist tendency that held sway in the PSOE recognised the need to form a Popular Front for combating the fascist danger and safeguarding democracy. At the same time the centrist leadership emphasised that the Popular Front programme should be implemented only by parliamentary methods.³ Wholly relying on governmental and parliamentary action, the centrists insisted on putting an end to mass struggle which the influential centrist leader Indalecio Prieto described as manifestation of revolutionary infantilism.⁴ However, attempts by centrists to prove that the bourgeoisie was supposed to lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution were clearly tardy, since the working class and its organisations were leading revolutionary struggle. By virtue of that the masses were hostile to appeals by centrists to cease mass struggle, and centrist influence diminished.

Conversely, the left-wing leader, Largo Caballero, appealed to the people for them to intensify the revolutionary process wherever they could, and advocated unity of the working class. Those appeals played a very positive part in mobilising people for revolutionary struggle and brought Caballero immense popularity.

¹ *SFIO. XXXI-e Congrès National. Compte-rendu sténographique*, Paris, 1934, p. 394.

² *El Socialista*, 21 April 1936.

³ *El Socialista*, 15 March 1936.

⁴ *El Socialista*, 19 May 1936.

And yet he was wrong to affirm that the working class's leading status in mass struggle obliged it to advance the fight for socialism as a practical objective. "Now our duty is to establish socialism," he said.¹ In accordance with that notion, Caballero rejected cooperation with bourgeois supporters of the Republic. As further events were to show, his position was a typical manifestation of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, loudly trumpeting about itself at a time of general revolutionary enthusiasm and sinking without trace at the first sign of difficulties. As leader of the first Popular Front government (formed on 4 September 1936), Caballero could not implement his "socialist projects". Circumstances compelled him to put into effect the communist-advanced programme and thereby make a substantial contribution to organising defence of the Republic from the fascist putschists. His vacillations, however, in forming a regular army, backing actions by Anarchists and Trotskyists in the forcible "socialisation" of industrial enterprises and peasant farms, actions that disorganised the rear,² led to Caballero and his supporters losing popularity. As a result the left wing of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party began to lose ground. In the face of failures to implement leftist projects the petty-bourgeois instability of Caballero and his supporters made itself felt. Once he had become head of government he cast off his previous announcements about working-class unity on the basis of cooperation between Socialists and Communists and took a hard anti-communist stand that inevitably prepared the ground for the victory of a capitulation policy. By the autumn of 1937 Caballero found himself in the same camp as Besteiro who had confessed "I am more an anti-Bolshevik than an anti-fascist."³

The anarchist insurrection of 4 March 1939 was a stab in the back for the Republic. Socialist leaders joined the National Defence Council established by the insurrectionists and thereby completed their sliding into the camp of capitulators. Such eminent socialist leaders as Juan Negrin and Alvarez del Vayo who had supported a policy of resisting the fascists were expelled from the party. Only the Communist Party remained true to the Republic right to the end and used all resources for organising resistance to the Franco forces. Thousands of rank-and-file Socialists fought fascists together with the Communists.

The French Socialist Party was better prepared than many other social democratic parties in combating fascism. In 1934 its leadership had established cooperation with Communists, and two years later

¹ *El Socialista*, 14 January 1936.

² See S. P. Pozharskaya, *The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, 1931-1939*, p. 167.

³ Quoted from Andrés Saborit, *Julián Besteiro*, Mexico, 1961, p. 411.

signed an agreement on forming a Popular Front for the purpose of organising a joint rebuff to fascist reaction.

All the same the SFIO leadership, while cooperating with Communists and invigorating joint struggle, still harboured doubts about independent popular action, which was to play a fateful part and ultimately undermine the Popular Front and then the party itself.

In the summer of 1937 Blum's government, giving way to bourgeois opposition, resigned, daunted at the prospect of scoring a victory over the bourgeoisie. As Blum said at a rally on 4 July 1937, "Let us suppose that we had agreed to carry on the struggle, naturally by legal and constitutional means, since no one could conceive of others; it would have spread invariably through the country, it would have been translated into a broad popular movement all the time gaining in amplitude and energy. But the circumstances, if one were to consider them seriously and scrupulously, measuring up the gravity of the actions and calculating their repercussions, did not permit us to envisage such resolutions nor to assume such responsibilities."¹

That stance brought misfortune to France. Bourgeois democracy could not transcend the bounds of the policy determined by the bourgeoisie which, panic-stricken at the "red danger", took the road to capitulation that brought France to defeat and fascist occupation in May 1940. On 10 July 1940 the great bulk of Socialists voted in the National Assembly to establish Marshal Petain's pro-fascist regime. That signified the political bankruptcy of the Socialist Party. Daniel Mayer who was to become the SFIO's General Secretary during the war explained the pro-Vichy mood of the French bourgeoisie as follows, "They preferred gendarmes of the 'New Order' to a risk of an additional amputation of their privileges... It may not have been very glorious, but it followed at least an obvious class solidarity." As far as the conduct of socialist leaders is concerned, Mayer could come up with no other explanation than "it was a matter primarily of cowardice and guilty conscience".² André Le Troquer, another prominent socialist leader, was to admit with some anguish that "I would never have thought there were so many cowards and traitors in my party".³

The following incident is perhaps an apt commentary on that situation. The former SFIO General Secretary and Vichy supporter Paul Faure accused Léon Blum as chairman of the socialist group in parliament of cowardice because Blum had been afraid of opposing

¹ *L'oeuvre de Léon Blum, 1937-1940*, Paris, 1965, p. 34.

² Daniel Mayer, *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance. Souvenirs et documents*, Paris, 1968, p. 9.

³ Quoted from D. Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961)*, Paris, 1962, p. 476.

the new pro-fascist constitution openly in parliament and had therefore failed to do his duty to the party. Later Blum asserted that his silence had not been dictated by fear: "None of those people who have closely followed my public actions, whether supporter or adversary, would suppose for a moment that I had been stopped by fear... In Vichy... I saw myself definitely separated from most of my comrades... I could not doubt that in the heat of the battle for which my intervention was giving the signal, the very big majority of my group would abandon me; what was I to say? ... I did not wish to offer the public spectacle of going back on that. It is that alone which paralysed me, that which kept my mouth shut."¹

Blum was right on one thing: he could not count on his speech inducing the majority of socialist deputies to change their minds. Yet what was typical was for Blum to take the socialist deputies into account and to be very concerned about the impression he would produce on parliament, while completely forgetting the hundreds and thousands of rank-and-file Socialists and common people. It did not enter his head that he should use parliament to appeal over the heads of deputies directly to the people and therefore save the honour of the Socialist Party.

The making of an absolute out of parliamentary forms of struggle in a situation where parliamentarism was disintegrating and where it was unable to intercept the fascist danger, disoriented the Socialist Party over effective ways of anti-fascist struggle. The demise of the parliamentary regime became the demise of the Socialist Party.

It should be borne in mind here that while the left and centrist tendencies were still somehow concerned about preserving autonomy within the bourgeois democratic system and about rejecting the extremes of anti-communism, the right-wingers were in favour of unconditional support for the bourgeois state and were fundamentally opposed to any cooperation with Communists in anti-fascist struggle.

Even after the close bond between fascism and large-scale capital had become obvious, the right social democratic leaders did not alter their definition of fascism as a petty-bourgeois movement. That unwillingness to reckon with reality concealed definite political designs: in seeing fascism as a petty-bourgeois trend, the right social democratic leaders reserved the right to pursue a policy of class collaboration practically with any faction of the bourgeoisie.

In Great Britain where the fascist movement did not grow into a serious political force, right-wing Labour leaders and ideologists preferred collaboration with traditional bourgeois parties on the basis of the "third force" formula—fighting both communism and fascism.

¹ *L'Œuvre de Léon Blum, 1940-1945*, Paris, 1955, pp. 88, 89.

Robert Fraser, Secretary of the London University Labour Party, more frankly than others explained the *raison d'être* of that position: "Fascism is, in fact... the political assertion by the middle classes both of their existence and of their power."¹ Noting that only in certain circumstances would that assertion lead the middle classes into the fascist camp, he maintained that the policy of class struggle, revolutionary activity and Marxist propaganda were the principal sources of fascism. He believed that only greater influence of Communists and Marxists could lead to the establishment of a capitalist dictatorship and even fascism.²

No matter how monstrous was this "theoretical" scheme, it generally corresponded to sentiments of the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party. The well-known British trade union leader Walter Citrine was inventor of the shameful formula: Marxism creates one fascist for every Communist. Mercilessly excluding from the party those members who were making the most modest steps towards joining together with Communists, Labour Party leaders did not waver in their policy of political collaboration with the Conservative and Liberal parties.

Fascism did not succeed in Britain, and for that reason all the political consequences of such anti-communist ideas of the right-wing Labour leadership were never fully exposed. But the political history of those countries in continental Europe where the fascist movement was more widespread provided convincing evidence that virulent anti-communism paved the way for collaboration between the extreme right wing of social democracy and fascism. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Finland headed by Väinö Tanner also made Communists the chief scapegoats for the development of fascism in Finland. A party appeal published in 1931 affirmed, "These [fascist.—*Ed.*] tendencies were insignificant for a long time. But of late the criminally irresponsible policy of the Communists has amplified them manyfold."³ Tanner proclaimed struggle against Communists as the main way of containing fascism, but the logic of that struggle led the socialist leadership into the camp of abettors of fascism and allies of Hitler Germany in World War II.

In Germany the threat of fascism coming to power had become so real in the early 1930s that organisation of anti-fascist struggle turned into the labour movement's key task. In addition, the Socialist Democratic Party, which had played the main part in setting up the Weimar Republic and running the state, could not confine itself to being a mere observer. Much depended on its policy—whether

¹ G. E. G. Catlin (ed.), *New Trends in Socialism*, London, 1935, p. 83.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 86.

³ *Rapports présentés au Quatrième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*..., p. 1.13.

fascism would achieve its goal or not. SPD leaders could not openly deny the fact that fascism, as Rudolf Breitscheid, chairman of the social democratic faction in the Reichstag, had recognised, "is targeted on democracy... in the interests of maintaining capitalism".¹ But the leaders strongly refused to draw political conclusions that followed from recognition of that fact. That is why the leading groups of German social democracy were widely infected with the theoretically untenable thesis, but which, however, met their pragmatic political calculations, of the non-capitalist nature of fascism. The crux of fascism was, as the socialist theoretical periodical *Gesellschaft* maintained, "the ultimate emancipation of the middle classes from the authority of big capital".²

Assertions about the non-capitalist nature of fascism had grave political consequences, giving rise to an underestimation of the fascist threat in Germany. The top leaders and ideologists of the Social Democratic Party stubbornly clung to the notion born in the mid-1920s that fascism could only win in economically and politically backward countries, but not in places like Germany. Georg Decker, for example, claimed that "such a crude dismantling of democracy is impossible in our country".³ And one and a half months before Hitler came to power Otto Wels, Chairman of the SPD Board, said: "I have already stated that I look optimistically on further events, despite the fact that the end of crisis is not in sight. But I also do not see a direct threat of any catastrophe. That is the Party Board's point of view."⁴

In claiming that fascism and Bolshevism were confrères, social democratic leaders concluded that the interests of anti-fascist struggle required an all-out intensification of anti-communism. *Vorwärts*, the SPD's central organ, wrote that "In Germany one ought not to fight seriously against fascism without combating communism as well."⁵ What is more, the party leaders regarded communism as a bigger danger than fascism. Breitscheid wrote in the spring of 1931 that their hope was that an improvement in the economic situation would reduce to naught the communist upsurge which was then presenting a greater danger than the Nazi menace.

In lumping Communists with the bitterest foes of democracy and the working class, the SPD leaders were recommending workers and democrats to seek defence from fascism in bourgeois parties and the bourgeois state. What is more, they made no exception even for

¹ *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Leipzig 1931... Protokoll*, p. 88.

² *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 12, 1930, p. 498.

³ *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 9, 1929, p. 233.

⁴ Hagen Schulze, *Anpassung oder Widerstand? Aus den Akten des Parteivorstands der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1932/33*, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1975, p. 98.

⁵ *Vorwärts*, 27 February 1930.

reactionary parties. As Alexander Schiffrin, an SPD theorist, put it, "Opposition to the dictatorship of the National Socialists will involve socialist workers, the political organisations of Catholicism... and, finally, forces of the old reaction that now holds the state machine in its hands."¹

Objecting that anti-fascist mass struggle was ineffective, Decker claimed that "There is now only one possibility for democratic policy and simultaneously for averting civil war whose consequences are obvious—that is the state's consistent anti-fascist policy."² Lack of faith in mass struggle and overestimation of the bourgeois-democratic state's capacity for intercepting the fascist danger on its own, engendered a "lesser evil" policy which drew SPD leaders into collaboration with Franz Papen's government, paving the way for Hitler's coming to power.

The anti-fascist potential of social democracy and the trade unions it led, and hostility to the Nazis by most social democratic leaders did not amount to much because their anti-communism was stronger than their anti-fascism. They were not ready to fight against either fascism or the imperialist system that had produced it.³ The reasons for social democracy's bankruptcy in the face of the fascist threat went even deeper: the social reformist policy had collapsed. In the early years of the Weimar Republic social democratic leaders had tried to combine defence of workers' day-to-day interests with the policy of class collaboration and anti-communism which had strengthened the class domination of the bourgeoisie. That flaw in social reformist policy had not been fully visible in a situation of relatively peaceful development.

When the most influential factions of the bourgeoisie banked mainly on fascism, the SPD leaders faced a dilemma: either to continue the policy of collaboration with bourgeois parties, even at the risk of preparing the way for a fascist victory, or breaking with that customary policy, overcoming their anti-communism and turning to mass anti-fascist struggle which would help to activate the common people politically. The SPD leaders, however, for many years saw the main objective of their activity in putting the brake on mass struggle.

Right-wing SPD leaders preferred to latch on to the old scheme that spelled disaster in the new circumstances.

Julius Braunthal waxed somewhat melancholically about Germany's political situation in the spring of 1933: "A fascist dictatorship cannot be disarmed by ballot papers."⁴ It is an admission with a

¹ *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 10, 1932, p. 287.

² *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 12, 1931, pp. 490-491.

³ *Faschismusforschung. Positionen, Probleme, Polemik*, Cologne, 1980, p. 405.

⁴ Julius Braunthal, *History of the International*, Vol. 2, p. 383.

ring of tardy self-revelation, for ever since the fascist threat had appeared SPD leaders had invariably extolled the charismatic power of voting and had rejected anti-fascist mass struggle. From the standpoint of analysing the ideological and political processes within the social democratic movement at a time when fascism was on the march, the ideological-political evolution of one strain of its right wing that took a neo-socialist position is very indicative.

The birth of that strain owes much to Hendrik de Man, leader of the Belgian Workers' Party and author of the book *The Psychology of Socialism*, which came out in 1926 and which sounded a call to drive Marxism out of the social democratic movement. De Man did not bother with theoretical arguments, emphasising that it was not Marx's teaching that interested him but the practical results of Marxism.

He refuted dialectical and historical materialism, and suggested that social democracy should be guided by a "modern philosophy" which he very vaguely defined as "pragmatic, voluntarist, pluralist and institutionalist".¹ Any philosophical school save Marxism fitted in with such a definition. De Man claimed that Marxism had distorted prospects for working-class struggle, orienting the workers to revolution, putting fetters on the everyday reformist activity of the labour movement, requiring immediate aims to be subordinate to the ultimate aims of struggle. Thirty years after Bernstein's initial revisionist approach, de Man was reiterating the slogan "The Movement Is All, the End Is Nothing." "Only the specific motives of everyday struggle are of decisive importance, not the ends that disappear into the future."²

In putting forward all-embracing pragmatism as the chief principle of social democratic policy, de Man was branding the very idea of class struggle disastrous—the main obstacle on the way to a class collaboration policy. He was particularly savage in his attack on the Marxist maxim of the class nature of the bourgeois state. He asserted that the state was a neutral mechanism in regard to classes, and that "in fact the will of the state is the overall direct result of combining the will of all persons who are constantly engaged in activity that determines the state's development, namely civil servants, MPs and journalists, but not employers or capitalists".³ The labour movement, he believed, had to give up its hostile attitude to the bourgeois state and pursue a policy of grafting on to it.

His anti-Marxist onslaught provoked a contradictory response from the social democratic movement. Left and centrist leaders, and even Vandervelde, opposed de Man. On the other hand, right-wing

¹ Hendrik de Man, *Zur Psychologie des Sozialismus*, Jena, 1926, p. 399.

² *Ibid.*, p. 413.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

groups noisily welcomed de Man's manifesto work, inspiring them to form a neo-socialist trend which claimed to open up a new era in socialism's political and ideological development.¹

In France right-wing leaders and ideologists of the SFIO like Marcel Déat, B. Montagnon, Adrien Marquet and André Philip relied on de Man's views and elaborated a platform of what they called French neo-socialism.² French neo-Socialists claimed that the Marxist teaching on class struggle and the historic mission of the proletariat made it difficult for the Socialist Party to work to draw non-proletarian masses to their side.

On that basis, the neo-Socialists put forward a programme of "truncated socialism" envisaging provisional withdrawal of those demands from the programmes of social democratic parties which could antagonise the middle classes and small owners.

Like de Man, French neo-Socialists were in favour of the labour movement giving up erstwhile hostility to the bourgeois state. Socialists, in their opinion, ought to become advocates of a strong state authority, even if they were not yet part of the government.³

This system of views constituted an ideological-political platform distinct from the French Socialist Party's official ideas: as the objective of struggle "anti-capitalism" had replaced socialism. The mass struggle had been renounced, and the main emphasis was on Socialists penetrating the state and strengthening state authority. On the outside the idea of an anti-capitalist programme looked promising; after all, under the banner of opposing the domination of big monopoly capital it was possible theoretically to get support from the great bulk of society, with the exception of a handful of the monopoly bourgeoisie. While rightly indicating the need to draw the peasants and middle strata into an alliance with the working class, however, the neo-Socialists had taken the slippery slope of tackling the problem by renouncing working-class hegemony in the fight for socialism.

The protest by petty proprietors against capitalist development is contradictory. As victims of capitalist concentration which impoverishes them, they are protesting against the dominance of big capital and there lies the reason for them taking part in the anti-capitalist struggle. As owners of private property, however, they are hostile to socialism and the revolutionary proletariat. During the years of crisis fascism cleverly used the desperation of bankrupt petty-bourgeois sectors of society for drawing them over to its side.

¹ H. de Man, *Le socialisme constructif*, Paris, 1933; *idem.*, *L'Idée socialiste. Suivi du plan du travail*, Paris, 1935.

² For more on the neo-Socialists, see S. S. Salychev, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-61, 215-65.

³ B. Montagnon, *Grandeur et servitude socialistes*, Paris, 1929, p. 118.

The fascists demagogically promised to do away with the dominance of big capital and, at the same time, to save society from the "revolutionary danger". The petty-bourgeois masses poured into the fascist movement. Is it therefore permissible to use such tactics, but in "democratic garb"? In putting forward the slogan "Overtake Fascism", Marcel Déat suggested taking fascist slogans and using them to keep the petty-bourgeois sections under social democratic influence. That proposal evinced a great wave of protest within the French Socialist Party. Léon Blum warned against "the danger in fighting fascism of applying the same [fascist—*Ed.*] methods and, on occasion, even ideology".¹

His premonition had not let Blum down. The ideological-political platform of the neo-Socialists did contain tendencies that predetermined their drift towards fascism. In 1933 the neo-Socialists left the French Socialist Party and formed their own party, the Socialist Party of France—the Jean Jaurès Alliance, and neosocialism was declared to be the party's ideological-political platform. All the same, liberation from the "fetters of Marxist doctrines" fairly quickly caused disorder among the neo-Socialists, and the most influential leaders evolved towards pro-fascist views; during the Nazi occupation Déat, Marquet, Montagnon and other neosocialist leaders threw in their lot with the Nazis.

Contemporary bourgeois and social democratic authors are ambiguous about neosocialism. On the one hand, the fight of the neo-Socialists against Marxism and their militant anti-communism merit approval. As H. Brugmans, Swiss Social Democrat and Rector of the European College, has put it, "Only to the extent that Social Democrats have abandoned Marxism have they been able to keep their grip on political development."²

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the militant anti-Marxism and extreme anti-communism of the neo-Socialists have paved the way for them to collaborate directly with fascism.

As Milorad M. Drachkovitch has written, "Both de Man and Déat slid, however, down the same slippery slope; from being discontent with the doctrinal and political routine of their parties and from wishing to rejuvenate socialism so as to oppose it more forcibly to totalitarian movements, they have evolved towards Nazi or fascist conceptions which have led them to the shameful submission to their country's enemy and going back on ideas that they had professed for most of their lives."³ While affirming that the adverse reaction of most social democratic leaders to neosocialism prevented

¹ *La vie socialiste*, Nos. 349-50, 1933, p. 21.

² Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *De Karl Marx à Léon Blum. La crise de la social-démocratie*, Geneva, 1954, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

the latter from showing its anti-fascist potential, Drachkovitch nonetheless remains silent on the fact that by contrast with the French socialist leaders, Belgian socialist leaders displayed a greater inclination towards neosocialism. In 1939 de Man became Chairman of the Belgian Workers' Party. The combination of neosocialism and the Belgian Workers' Party did not expose the mythical anti-fascism of the neo-Socialists, but it did draw the whole party into capitulation. After Belgium's defeat de Man announced the party's dissolution, calling on Socialists loyally to cooperate with the Nazis and by his action displayed an example of very active collaborationism.

So we see that, *on the attitude to fascism*, which was the key political issue of the 1930s, *social democracy was unable to produce a common position*. On its left flank voices grew stronger for the communist-proposed strategy of anti-fascist struggle, and on the right the ground was being prepared for collaboration with the fascists.

An LSI conference took place in Paris in August 1933 devoted to issues of organising anti-fascist struggle. During the debates speakers voiced such contradictory ideas that it was impossible to formulate any integral recommendation on the subject of the debate. In proposing the draft resolution, Otto Bauer stressed that the draft satisfied no one since "the debates have revealed deep-seated disagreements not only between parties, but also in the heart of the parties themselves".¹ The text of the resolution contained a strident condemnation of fascism, yet practically lacked any recommendations on specific ways and means of combating it.

Not being able to work out a common policy of combating fascism, LSI leaders were unable to convince all the parties to adhere to a common policy in relations with Communists either. In the summer of 1934 the SFIO leadership submitted a draft resolution for the LSI Executive Committee to look at in favour of a united front envisaging cooperation with Communists. This proposal was backed by the Spanish, Italian and Austrian social democratic parties. But it ran into opposition from the British, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish and Czechoslovak parties. J. W. Albarda, Chairman of the Social Democratic Labour Party of the Netherlands, threatened to cause a split in the International if the French proposal was accepted.² As a result, the LSI Executive Committee gave each party the right to tackle the issue as it wished, stating that its affiliated parties were "free to act in this matter in accordance with [their] complete autonomy".³

¹ *La vie socialiste*, No. 343, 1933, p. 39.

² *Het Volk*, 17 October 1934.

³ Quoted from Adolf Sturmthal, *The Tragedy of European Labor*, op. cit., p. 267.

In other words, the LSI leadership was unable to work out an agreed policy of fighting fascism. In each individual country social democratic leaders defined their own attitude to fascism, guided by narrow pragmatic considerations. LSI documents declared the anti-fascist struggle to be the principal objective of social democracy, but far from all social democratic parties were guided by that instruction in their own political practice.

Since in such circumstances any hard-and-fast position would have led to a split in the social democratic movement the LSI leadership preferred to preserve the veneer of unity at the price of renouncing attempts to work out a common policy of anti-fascist struggle. Such a position not only doomed the LSI to inaction, it made it an obstacle to anti-fascist unity. In order to conceal that unhappy fact, LSI leaders resorted to calumny, stirring up anti-communist prejudices.

In October 1934 the Comintern sent LSI leaders a proposal for jointly conducting a campaign in support of Republican Spain, and on 15 October Brussels was the venue for a meeting between Friedrich Adler and Emile Vandervelde, on the one hand, and Comintern representatives Maurice Thorez and Marcel Cachin, on the other, for a discussion of the proposal. During the talks, however, the two Social Democrats displayed complete indifference to the idea of a joint campaign in support of Republican Spain, demanding as a pre-condition of their agreement to discuss the question the Comintern's declaration that its policy in bourgeois-democratic countries was wrong.

The Seventh Comintern Congress of August 1935 appealed to Social Democrats and to all democratic forces in the world to come together to repulse fascism. The only demand on participants in an anti-fascist front was their readiness to fight fascism.

And once more the LSI leaders refused to examine the Comintern appeal under the pretext that Communists had not condemned their own tactics and strategy of revolutionary struggle, and that the basic principles of party and organisational work of communist parties had remained unchanged. The irresponsibility of that stance was made even worse by the fact that in demanding that Communists make a concession in favour of social democratic policy, LSI leaders were unable to offer in exchange any integral programme of anti-fascist struggle.

The onset of fascism put to a severe test the capacity of all political forces to fight for democracy. Of all political forces only the communist movement fully withstood that cruel test. In that connection, G.D.H. Cole has written, "the Communists had at any rate fought for many years practically alone against the world forces making for war and for the maintenance of capitalism, whereas the

Social Democrats had offered nothing more than fine words and had surrendered, in Italy, Germany, and even Austria, almost without striking a blow in defence of the working-class movement... It fell to the Communists and to a small minority of left-wing Trade Unions, which came mainly under Communist control, to play the main part in such underground resistance movements as were able to continue in being under the Fascist regimes."¹

In trying to explain that, social democratic writers frequently say that communist parties were better equipped for doing illegal work than the Social Democrats. But they pass the main point over in silence—the ability to sacrifice lives for the sake of democracy and that, when assessing the communist movement by that irrefutable criterion, it has to be recognised that it acted as the most democratic force in the world. Cole was one of the few to grasp the nettle and come to the conclusion that cannot have cheered the hearts of social democracy: "The devoted service given by Communists to their Party was contrasted with the laxity, or even indifference, with which the vast majority of Social Democrats treated the claims of their parties... Communism made immensely greater demands on its members than Social Democracy, and appeared, despite its fulminations against 'idealism', to be in practice much the more idealistic creed, and to inspire much greater practical devotion and readiness for personal sacrifice."²

While the October 1917 Revolution in Russia undermined the authority of reformism as a socialist force, the years of anti-fascist struggle did great *harm to the reputation of reformism as defender of democracy*. Experience of anti-fascist struggle revealed the limited nature of democratic potential in social democratic policy, and at the same time in the course of combating fascism the revolutionary movement was the main guarantor of democratic development.

FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

The decisions of the Founding Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, noting that the LSI had "as its supreme objective the fight against capitalism leading to war"³, contained formulations that were directly borrowed from Bolshevik Party documents, in particular mention of the need to act primarily against the imperialist "bourgeoisie of one's own country", and "to revoke all secret agreements", and expressed the apprehension that the League of Nations

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. 5: *Socialism and Fascism, 1931-1939*, London, 1960, pp. 11, 316.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in Hamburg...*, p. 102.

should not become "an instrument of reaction and imperialism". The implementation of those declarations could have made a fundamental contribution to *the fight against the forces of war* and imperialist reaction internationally, if only the vigorous accusations against capitalism had been backed up by recognition of the fact that Soviet Russia and the revolutionary movement had become the main bastion of the forces of peace; and corresponding practical conclusions had been drawn from that recognition.

At the same time, the LSI call "to resist any form of intervention by capitalist governments against Russia"¹ was rather paying homage to the popular mood. On the whole the Hamburg Congress decisions were strongly imbued with anti-Sovietism.

Social democracy retained the right to criticise the militarist tendency of bourgeois policy and at the same time to condemn Soviet foreign policy. It could not, however, eternally sit on the fence when dealing with real international relations. And anti-Sovietism increasingly got the better of pacifism.

At the Second and Third LSI congresses, the right wing forced through a revision of the Hamburg decisions. The Second Congress actually threw out the notion of capitalism's responsibility for war. In their urge to make the Soviet Union and national liberation movements responsible for war, LSI leaders equipped themselves with the bourgeois thesis of the "defensive" nature of imperialism's aggressive actions, allegedly being provoked by the militancy of revolutionary forces.²

The Second Congress advanced the formula that for many years was to define the foreign policy tenets of social democracy: "Organised workers are convinced that the security of every people and peace on earth must be based on arbitration and on universal and complete disarmament."³ Later, in 1928, the Brussels LSI Congress obliged all social democratic parties "to exercise the strongest popular pressure, even the most revolutionary, on any government that refuses to accept or respect arbitration, resorting to war in the event of an international conflict".⁴ To orient the labour movement to fighting for disarmament was of positive significance. But the orientation substantially lost value by wholly placing the securing of peace and disarmament on bourgeois governments and international arbitration agencies. In a situation where the Soviet Union was the only socialist state in the world, consistently campaigning for peace

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 105.

² *Zweiter Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale in Marseille 22. bis 27. August 1925*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 362-64.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁴ *Troisième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*, Vol. 2, Sections V-IX, p. IX.8.

and social progress, where the peoples of a vast segment of the world had not yet won their political independence, and where the League of Nations represented mainly European capitalism engaged in building up arms, international arbitration was likely to turn into diktat by the imperialist powers directed against the Soviet Union, the revolutionary labour and national liberation movements. In the resolutions of the Brussels Congress of 1928 the call to fight against "capitalism leading to war" was replaced by an orientation towards reaching accord among the main capitalist powers. As if patting itself on the back for the peace campaign, the LSI claimed that it "had prepared and obtained accord among the big powers of Western and Central Europe, an essential basis for peace".¹

By removing responsibility for war from capitalism as a social system, the Brussels Congress produced the following picture of the world balance of power: the "democratic nations" stood opposed to fascist dictatorship and also to "the regime of dictatorship by a terrorist minority" in the Soviet Union.²

The system of views worked out by social democratic leaders and ideologists disoriented the workers over conditions of fighting for peace and affirming democratic principles in international relations. In Blum's words, under bourgeois democracy the popular aspiration for peace finds its fullest reflection in the foreign policy of bourgeois-democratic governments, while under a "dictatorship", the popular aspiration for peace is suppressed and finds no reflection in foreign policy. On that reasoning Blum appealed "for every individual and every group that claims to work to organise peace to work as a matter of duty to destroy dictatorships... The free states must conduct a campaign of pacific destruction against dictatorial governments."³

In political practice the struggle to "destroy dictatorships" meant support for the foreign policy of big capital which was doing all it could to use fascist states as the chief strike force against the Soviet Union. The fight to "destroy dictatorships" by no means hampered the British government from giving loans to Horthy Hungary, or the French government from backing the Pilsudski regime.

The high-flown statements by social democratic leaders on the need to "destroy dictatorships" had their continuation in political practice as justification for the anti-Soviet plans of imperialist powers. In 1926 Joseph Paul-Boncour, one of the French socialist right-wingers, gained notoriety by calling Pilsudski soldiers "sentries of civilisation on the frontier with the Soviet Union".⁴ This outburst

¹ *Ibid.*, p. IX.4.

² *Ibid.*, p. IX.6

³ Léon Blum, *Les problèmes de la paix*, Paris, 1931, pp. 190, 192.

⁴ *La nouvelle revue socialiste*, No. 9, 1926, p. 9.

shocked even many LSI leaders and caused strong protests within the social democratic movement itself. But all the protests were mainly about the form rather than the substance of what he had said.

By the end of the 1920s views began to circulate among ruling groups of Social Democrats that essentially justified counter-revolutionary violence. Kautsky's book *Bolshevism in a Blind Alley* published in 1930 was an outright call to counter-revolutionary forces to raise an insurrection in the Soviet Union. "And once again now," he wrote, "we can expect the great day for the whole of Europe if it comes to a democratic uprising in Russia and it will prevail: an end to crisis, greater power for socialist parties, disarmament, Pan-Europe... A democratic revolution in Russia would get the whole of Europe moving."¹

While condemning the violence of the revolutionary people in 1918, Kautsky justified the violence of a bourgeois state by references to legitimacy, yet in 1930 he was welcoming violence of counter-revolution against a socialist state, thereby proving that all his arguments about the legitimacy of violence only masked the counter-revolutionary essence of his views.

In foreign policy strategy, the LSI paid very little attention to the *national liberation movement*.² The programme on the colonial question adopted at the Brussels LSI Congress divided all colonies and dependencies into three groups: 1. countries capable of governing their own affairs; 2. countries developed enough to receive autonomy; and 3. countries for which liberation from foreign domination would mean "regression to primitive barbarity". The right to independence was recognised for the first group, to autonomy for the second, and retention of foreign domination as...a blessing for the third! The programme contained a detailed list of measures whose implementation would facilitate higher living standards for the peoples of colonies and dependencies.

In regard to ways and means of achieving the set goals, the recommendations were extremely laconic: "The Labour and Socialist International proposes that all LSI affiliated parties should make contact with the movements for liberation of oppressed peoples so as to give them support in the struggle for the principles and demands inscribed in this resolution, and especially so as to promote the political and trade union labour movement of these countries towards democracy and socialism."³

¹ Karl Kautsky, *Der Bolschewismus in der Sackgasse*, Berlin, 1930, p. 150.

² G. Y. Skorov (Ed.), *Social Reformism and the Colonial Issue (Stance Taken by Right-Wing Socialists on Disintegration of the Colonial System)*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 32-38 (in Russian).

³ *Troisième Congrès de l'Internationale Ouvrière Socialiste*, Vol. 2, Sections V-IX, pp. IX.13, IX.19.

The absence of any analysis of problems of national liberation struggle and the forces waging that struggle relieved social democratic parties of the need to adhere to the common position in regard to specific national liberation movements and therefore made it possible to bring together in the LSI the most varied and contradictory positions of social democratic parties on the colonial issue. They were actually being given a free hand in determining their own specific policy on the colonial question, freedom to be guided by principles that allowed the most arbitrary interpretation. It was therefore possible widely to adapt the policy of social democratic leaders to the colonial policy of their bourgeoisie. Describing the then colonial policy of social democracy, Palmiro Togliatti wrote, "In each country it conducted a completely specific colonial policy. It was a policy of solidarity with or direct connivance in the colonial enterprises of the bourgeoisie."¹

Imperial psychology prevailed over the policy of social democratic parties in colonial powers. In countries without colonies the socialist leaders felt more free to uphold the rights of nations to self-determination. But all social democratic leaders adhered to the common antagonism to revolutionary, especially armed national liberation struggle.

They maintained that it was the reformist policy of the imperial powers, not revolutionary struggle, which would resolve the colonial problem. "As for colonies and dependencies," wrote G.D.H. Cole, "they [Social Democrats —*Ed.*] wished those they thought capable of managing their own affairs to be advanced as speedily as possible towards self-government, but envisaged this as being brought about, not by colonial revolutions, but by concessions of increasing self-government by the imperialist powers under pressure of the proposed international authority."²

On the whole, at the time when capitalism was temporarily stable, social democracy was on the side of the bourgeois world, against the Soviet Union and the revolutionary movement. And yet to the extent that social democracy owed something to pacifism it made also a positive contribution to the popular anti-war campaign. The pacifism of social democracy was in tune with the anti-war mood of the ordinary people, their protests against the slaughter and wanton destruction of World War I, their determination to prevent that crime being repeated. The backing by social democratic leaders for pacifist tendencies in bourgeois policy also played a positive part.

¹ Palmiro Togliatti, *Opere*, Vol. 2, Rome, 1972, p. 474.

² G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. 4, Part 1: *Communism and Social Democracy 1914-1931*, London, 1958, p. 350.

Yet the weakness of the pacifist position of social democratic leaders was particularly evident when the tendency towards war became dominant in the world bourgeoisie's policy. The circumstances of capitalism's general crisis produced the peculiar nature of preparation for World War II. However profound were the inter-imperialist contradictions, all the imperialist powers shared a common urge to deal with those contradictions at the expense of the Soviet Union. Fascist governments openly proclaimed their main foreign policy objective as destroying the socialist state, while the ruling groups of the USA, Great Britain and France pursued a policy of "appeasing" the fascist aggressors, counting on directing aggression ultimately against the Soviet Union. What is more, even in countries that had fallen victim to fascist aggression, reaction was pursuing a defeatist policy, widely resorting to pacifist phraseology. Military resistance to fascist aggression was rejected as a measure incompatible with pacifism, while the policy of concessions to the pretensions of fascist states was proclaimed to be the only means of securing peace.

That metamorphosis of bourgeois pacifism undermined the very foundations of social democracy's foreign policy, dooming to failure all attempts by its leaders to accommodate themselves to the latest development in international relations.

Decisions of the Paris LSI Conference of August 1933 were very indicative. On the one hand they contained vigorous calls to wage a revolutionary struggle against fascism, and on the other they said, "the workers of the democratic countries must not submit to the temptation of the idea of war, even if war is described to them as the means of emancipating enslaved peoples."¹

In publishing the sharpest protests against actions by fascist aggressors, social democratic leaders accompanied them with reference to the fact that only disarmament and even unilateral disarmament (in the event of Germany's and Italy's refusal) by bourgeois-democratic states could remove the danger of war. "If Germany refuses [to sign a general disarmament agreement—*Ed.*]" said Léon Blum, "we continue to hope that an equitable convention, even concluded without her, would be inevitably imposed on her by the force of unanimity and of the world community."² Irrespective of the intentions of those who penned the declarations, objectively they hampered organisation of resistance to fascist aggression, and above all the use of military sanctions against the fascist states. It is easy to understand that such pacifism should begin to cause irritation in democratic circles. The *Daily Herald*, newspaper of the

¹ Julius Braunthal, *History of the International*, Vol. 2, p. 558.

² Adolf Sturmthal, *The Tragedy of European Labor*, p. 250.

British Labour Party, gained the sad notoriety in those circles by invariably condemning proposals to use force against fascism. As Sturmthal writes with irony, "It was at this time that one British newspaperman asked a colleague whether he thought the pro-Nazi foreign policy of the *Daily Herald* might be explained by some of Goebbels's money finding its way into the labor paper. 'It is even worse than that,' was the answer, 'they do it for nothing.'"¹

After Hitler had come to power, the overwhelming majority of social democratic parties followed mainly in the wake of the foreign policy pursued by the British-French bloc, a policy of appeasing the fascist aggressors. The social democratic leaders could not openly rubber-stamp the class motives of the appeasement policy without the risk of losing face before the workers, while "above-classes" pacifism still retained an aura of smoothing over the less acceptable aspects of the appeasement policy in the public's eyes.

The entry of German troops into the Rhineland in the spring of 1936 provoked a sharp reaction from the French government which initially had intended even to declare partial mobilisation. SFIO leaders resolutely protested at such intentions seeing them as a threat to peace. The Socialist Party delegation led by Paul Faure, the party's General Secretary, paid a visit to the head of government Albert Sarraut and expressed a protest at his speech by radio on 8 March 1936 which, in the opinion of socialist leaders, was couched in an impermissibly threatening tone towards Germany. In Britain Labour Party leaders were advocating talks with Germany and a revision of the Versailles Treaty articles with account for German claims. They were demanding that the government put the necessary pressure on France.

Social democratic leaders displayed considerable vacillation on the question of applying sanctions against Italy which had refused to stop aggression in Abyssinia. French Socialists with many reservations had agreed to the use of economic sanctions, but had staunchly refused to countenance the possible use of military sanctions. When the British Navy turned up in the Mediterranean Léon Blum published an article in which he protested strongly at that action.

Indicative in that respect is the story of French arms deliveries to Republican Spain. The Conservative government in Britain, being hostile to the Spanish Republican government, was a staunch opponent of giving military aid to Republican Spain. Giving way to pressure from the British government, Blum put forward the idea of "non-intervention" by other countries in Spanish affairs. France unilaterally ceased arms deliveries to Spain.

¹ Adolf Sturmthal. *The Tragedy of European Labor*, p. 238.

In an attempt to justify the non-intervention policy, Blum widely resorted to pacifist phraseology and spoke in pathetic terms of the peace-building mission of the French nation. In fact, it was no more than shutting his eyes to fascism, the instigators of World War II.

In the prevailing international situation, Blum's government could have helped Republican Spain substantially, but at the cost of worsening relations with Britain and coming together with the Soviet Union that was advocating a decisive rebuff to fascist intervention in Spain. The socialist leaders thought the price too high to avert the triumph of fascism in Spain.

Social democracy was unable to work out a common attitude to the Munich sell-out either. In October 1938 the LSI Executive Committee published a "protest" at the Munich deal, on the subject of which Adolf Sturmthal wrote, "But since it had to be acceptable to anti-Munich British and pro-Munich French Socialists, and inoffensive to the neutral Belgian, Swiss, and Scandinavian labor parties, the protest was directed against the form rather than the substance of 'appeasement'."¹

The LSI Executive Committee statement reflected the far-reaching disorder in social democratic ranks. As also on the eve of World War I, social democratic parties were dependent on bourgeois foreign policy. Only the left-wing tendencies in some social democratic parties were able to pursue an independent foreign policy. The most influential champion of those sentiments, the left-wing SFIO leader Jean Zyromski, emphasised that only a decisive rebuff to fascist aggression could safeguard peace in Europe and that the organisation of effective rebuff was impossible without cooperation with the Soviet Union and labour unity on the basis of Social Democrats and Communists coming together. The influence of left tendencies in the social democratic movement was, however, insignificant.²

The social democratic movement reflected differences in the camp of the bourgeois-democratic states. As the fascist 'Axis' grew stronger, fascist Germany's claim to establish world domination became increasingly clear. In drawing up plans to attack the Soviet Union, Germany was intending to strike the first blow against Western Europe. Hence the appearance of opposition to the appeasement policy among Western ruling groups. The British bourgeoisie did not think that its domination was under such a serious threat from revolutionary danger as to permit the appeasement policy to become

¹ A. Sturmthal, op. cit., p. 325.

² *Parti Socialiste, Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière. XXVI-e Congrès national tenu à Royan, Juin 1938, Paris, 1938, pp. 569-73.*

a capitulation policy. The French bourgeoisie, which had not yet recovered from its fear of the Popular Front era, was even more infected with capitulation sentiments. Therefore the British Labour Party took an anti-Munich, while the French Socialist Party a pro-Munich stand.

The political defeats of the Anglo-French entente before the advance of fascist states undermined the authority of Britain and France in the eyes of the bourgeoisie of smaller countries, which tried to ensure security for their countries by taking a neutral position. Accordingly, the Scandinavian, Belgian and Swiss social democratic parties affiliated to LSI switched to neutrality. Although the social democratic parties were normally inclined more than bourgeois parties to adopt energetic measures against fascist aggression, on the whole, not being able to overcome the class limitedness of the foreign policy of bourgeois ruling circles in their own countries, they were also captive to the fateful policy of appeasement.

Germany's invasion of Poland meant another nail in the coffin of appeasement. Britain and France, which had counted on directing fascist aggression eastwards, against the Soviet Union, found themselves engaged in military conflict with Germany. Yet even this blow did not shake social democratic leaders out of their stupor. Many of them joined the chorus of anti-Soviet assailants over the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact.

The anti-Sovietism and anti-communism of social democratic leaders reached its climax during the Soviet-Finnish military conflict. The Labour Party appealed to "the free nations of the world to give every practicable aid to the Finnish nation in its struggle to preserve its own institutions of Civilisation and Democracy".¹ The pacifist Léon Blum broke all records for militancy: "He was for helping the Finns to the utmost and at all cost, even though this led to war with Russia."² The SFIO leadership took the most active part in persecuting the Communist Party which was then outlawed.

The moral and political bankruptcy of social democratic leaders caused the disintegration of the LSI and withdrawal from the political arena of the biggest social democratic parties. The LSI leaders repeated the road trodden by opportunist leaders of the Second International, demonstrating yet again that opportunism curtails both the revolutionary and the democratic potential of the labour movement.

¹ *The Labour Party, Report of the 39th Annual Conference held in The Pavilion, Bournemouth, May 13th-16th 1940*, London, 1947, p. 13.

² Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years. Memoirs 1931-1945*, London, 1957, p. 292.

The demise of the Labour and Socialist International was a definite result of the activity and ideological evolution of social democratic parties during the 1920s and 1930s.

On the one hand, the social democratic masses, the trade unions and parties displayed a certain activity in campaigning for everyday workers' demands. Most social democratic parties tended to defend democratic liberties and institutions. The ordinary people under the influence of Social Democrats constituted a substantial detachment of the anti-war movement. The anti-militarist formulas in social democratic documents and the speeches by their leaders were generally in tune with popular anti-war sentiment. In Spain Socialists took part with Communists in revolution and the national revolutionary war. The French Socialist Party joined the Popular Front that barred the way to fascism in France. The experience of Spain and France showed particularly convincingly that cooperation between Social Democrats and Communists established the best conditions for democratic development and social progress. The declaration of socialist objectives in the social democratic press and literature, the recognition by left-wing Social Democrats of the need for socialist revolution and proletarian dictatorship had a positive significance to the extent that they helped distance workers from bourgeois parties and mould their readiness to fight for socialist aims.

On the other hand, the opportunist practice of social democratic leaders predetermined a general shift of social democracy to the right, which had a disastrous impact on the labour and democratic movement. The cooperation between Social Democrats and Communists was a relatively rare and shortlived circumstance, while on the whole right-wing leaders succeeded in keeping social democratic parties on the rails of anti-communism, splitting the working class and reducing its fighting capacity. The policy of class collaboration pursued by social democratic leaders helped strengthen bourgeois domination during the temporary, partial stabilisation of capitalism. Moved by hostility to mass action and by anti-communism, social democratic leaders did a great deal of harm to organisation of the anti-fascist and anti-war movement in Germany and several other countries. Their anti-Soviet policy intensified dependence on the foreign policy of "their own" bourgeoisie. As a consequence, social democracy could not at the decisive moment resist the aggressive designs of imperialism as it drew the world into war. Finally, the opportunist practice of social democratic leaders considerably devalued the propagating of socialist ideals. What is more, the anti-Sovietism and anti-communism of social democratic leaders had an adverse ideological-political effect on the working class, since it objectively facilitated the efforts of the

bourgeoisie to discredit effective ways of fighting for socialism.

As a result, social democratic leaders did not carry out their promises to advance towards socialism, and their chosen political course objectively diminished the democratic potential of social democracy. All that caused a deep-going crisis in social democracy on the eve of World War II. Only a return to its socialist and democratic roots could now resurrect the social democratic movement.

Part Three

THE WORKING CLASS
IN THE
NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

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Chapter 7

THE ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN ASIA AND AFRICA

In the 1920s-1930s, the national liberation movement in Asia and Africa continued to grow stronger. In the process gradual changes took place in its character, driving forces, demands, geographical extent, etc.

In the first place, during the inter-war years capitalism in the colonial and dependent countries developed at a noticeably faster pace and this was accompanied by an increase in the size of the proletariat. The working class taking shape at a time when the national liberation movement was on the uprise, acquired a number of specific features: a comparatively early recognition of its own particular interests as a class, a high level of activity, the desire to create its own class organisation even during the early stages of its development, etc. These circumstances alongside the influence exercised by the international working-class and communist movement explained the emergence of 30 communist and labour parties and a significant number of trade union organisations in the colonial and dependent countries. By creating the necessary conditions for transforming the proletariat from a class "in itself" into a class "for itself", their activities had a significant influence on the course of the national liberation movement and helped to place the working class in the vanguard of the national liberation struggle.

The emergence of the working class as an independent organised force virtually everywhere led to changes in the aims and forms of the national liberation movement. Whereas previously its aim was to obtain partial political or economic concessions from imperialism, by the 1930s its slogan had become the attainment of full independence.

The emergence of the working class in the vanguard of the national liberation movement transformed it into an integral part of the world revolutionary process. By weakening the domination of imperialism,

limiting the opportunities for exploiting the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries, restricting the expanded reproduction of capitalist relationships, and at times undermining them, the national liberation movement created the conditions for the collapse of colonialism.

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF WORKING-CLASS FORMATION IN ASIA AND AFRICA

The multi-structural nature of the colonial and dependent economies, their enforced incorporation into the capitalist world economy and international division of labour during the disintegration of feudalism, and the absolute domination of foreign capital and imported goods on their domestic markets predetermined the very specific processes governing the formation of the proletariat in Asia and Africa.¹

In *China* the disintegration of traditional forms of pre-capitalist production caused a mass movement to the towns by people who had lost their source of income. By the beginning of the 1930s, a large semi-proletarian mass of people numbering more than 30 million had piled into the towns. These people were employed in casual and daily paid jobs (rickshaw drivers, coolies, day labourers, etc.).

It was from this semi-proletarian mass that workers in capitalist production were formed. In the mid-1930s, the number of industrial factory workers reached 1.3 million.² The pressure exerted by the army of unemployed had a tremendous influence on the conditions of employment and work. The possibility of replacing a worker at any moment ensured extremely low wage rates, irregular wage payments, and unrestricted hours of work. The absolute forms of exploitation predominating in Chinese industry resulted in an extremely rapid exhaustion of labour power. Despite the relatively large number of workers in capitalist industry, a nucleus of the established proletariat had only just begun to be formed.

In the 1920s-1930s, workers of all types constituted about 2.5 per cent of the gainfully occupied population of which factory workers accounted for little more than 0.1 per cent. It was characteristic of

¹ See A. I. Levkovsky, *Specific Features of the Development of Capitalism in India*, Moscow, 1963; *A Modern History of China (1917-1970)*, Moscow, 1972; Ye. P. Zakaznikova, *The Working Class and the National Liberation Movement in Indonesia*, Moscow, 1971; Yu. N. Rozaliev, *Specific Features of the Development of Capitalism in Turkey (1923-1960)*, Moscow, 1962; L. A. Fridman, *The Capitalist Development of Egypt (1882-1939)*, Moscow, 1963; *The African Working Class*, Moscow, 1966 (all in Russian).

² *The Chinese Working Class (1949-1974)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 9 (in Russian).

China that there were virtually no wage labourers in agriculture.¹

Despite its extremely difficult living and working conditions, the Chinese working class managed to organise trade unions. Between 1925 and 1927 the number of trade unionists increased from 500,000 to 2.8 million.²

In *Vietnam* towards the beginning of the Second World War about 300,000 people were employed in capitalist production, of whom two-thirds worked in the mining and manufacturing industries and in transport, and about one-third (80,000) were plantation workers.³

There were also about a million agricultural workers chiefly employed on farms owned by pre-capitalist producers.⁴ The vast majority of these workers were day labourers or seasonal workers.

Even industrial workers to some extent retained their ties with the land. Part of the working class consisted of ethnic Chinese and Khmers. A characteristic feature of the Vietnamese working class was the relatively high level of concentration of its basic workforce. For example, more than 25,000 miners worked in pits belonging to the Charbonnage du Tonkin company. Thousands of workers were employed at factories such as the Saigon munitions factory, the Haiphong cement factory, the Nam Dinh textile factory and a number of others.

Living and working conditions were exceptionally difficult for the proletariat. Up until 1927 there was no standard working day and even after the establishment of a 10-hour working day it lasted in practice for between 11 and 13 hours and even more.⁵ Female and child labour was widespread.

In *India* a large working-class stratum was formed in the course of colonial exploitation but the majority of workers (20 million) was employed in agriculture where pre-capitalist relationships dominated. On the eve of the Second World War about 2 million were employed in manufacturing industry, 1.5 million on the railways and 1.2 million on British-owned plantations in the capitalist sector of the economy.⁶

¹ Ibid., p. 12; A. V. Meliksetov, "Some Specific Features of the Formation of the Chinese Working Class Towards the Beginning of the Modern Period", *Ninth Conference on "Society and State in China"*, Part III, Moscow, 1978, p. 7 (in Russian).

² V. Strakhov, "Questions Regarding the Chinese Trade Union Movement", *Problemy Kitaya*, No. 2, 1930, p. 31 (in Russian).

³ C. Robequain, *The Economic Development of French Indo-China*, New York, 1944, p. 248.

⁴ *A History of Vietnam in Modern Times (1917-1965)*, Moscow, 1970, p. 35 (in Russian).

⁵ R. A. Popovkina, *French Monopolies in Indo-China Prior to the Second World War*, Moscow, 1960, p. 205 (in Russian).

⁶ A. I. Levkovsky, *Some Specific Features of the Development of Capitalism in India Up to 1947*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 104-05 (in Russian).

The relative backwardness of Indian industry was combined with a very high level of concentration of production and employment: over half the manufacturing proletariat worked at factories employing one thousand and more workers. The Indian industrial proletariat was concentrated in a few parts of the country and in a small number of factories and this made it easier to organise. However, the proletariat was drawn from many different nationalities, spoke different languages, and was marked by caste and religious differences. The situation of the working class was severely worsened by the existence of an enormous army of unemployed and this created the conditions for lowering wages, increasing the length of the working day, etc.

In the mid-1920s, about 10 per cent of Indian industrial workers at factories employing not less than 20 people belonged to trade unions which had 320,000 members. The postal workers were the most highly organised, almost 50 per cent of them belonging to trade unions. About 15 per cent of railway workers were organised, 10.5 per cent of textile workers, and 1.4 per cent of print workers.

In *Indonesia* a specific feature of colonial exploitation restricted the growth of the established proletariat: the colonial authorities introduced a law according to which peasants had to work a certain number of days at European factories or in the construction of public projects as a form of taxation. At the beginning of the 1930s, the number of such workers reached 3 million. There were about 1.5 million permanently employed workers. Sugar mill workers formed the largest section of the working class (150,000 people).

The geographically scattered nature of the proletariat, the siting of the majority of industrial factories in rural locations, the ties maintained by workers with their villages, and the pressure of peasant mentality caused serious difficulties in organising the working class. This created opportunities for arbitrary action by supervisors, employers and officials.¹

In *Turkey* in the mid-1920s between 120,000 and 140,000 workers were employed in craft trades, between 60,000 and 70,000 in manufacturing industry, and between 50,000 and 60,000 in transport. There were about 300,000 permanent farm workers. Even before the First World War the Turkish proletariat managed to set up a number of militant trade unions.²

In *Iran* the majority of workers were employed in small and very small factories. About 150,000 people of whom two-thirds were chil-

¹ A. A. Guber, "The Condition of the Working Class in Indonesia", *Revolutionny Vostok*, No. 4-5, 1928, pp. 132-33 (in Russian).

² *The World Trade Union Movement. A Trade Union International Reference Book*, Part III, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, pp. 337-41 (in Russian).

dren worked in carpet weaving workshops.¹ The most important sections of the working class were concentrated in the oilfields situated in the south of the country and in the textile mills of Isfahan, Tabriz, Rasht, etc.

In *Afghanistan* industrial workers including those employed in construction, transport, artisan workshops and manufactories were primarily concentrated in Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Pul-i-Khumri, Mazār-i-Sharif and other towns.² At the end of the 1930s there were more than 150,000 people employed in industry.³

In *Egypt*, the most industrially developed Arab country, there were 95,000 industrial workers (at factories employing not less than 10 people) in 1927 and between 160,000 and 170,000 in 1937. The workers of Cairo and Alexandria (in 1937 numbering 95,700 and 44,500 people respectively) formed the main section of the Egyptian proletariat. The living conditions of the workers were marked by a combination of capitalist exploitation and colonial and feudal oppression. They worked to the point of exhaustion; they were of no special value to the entrepreneur since it was almost always possible to find replacements coming from the villages. The working day lasted on average about 12 hours. 40 per cent of all workers were seasonal.

Both industry and the working class were much less developed in the other Arab countries. In *Algeria* 20,000-30,000 workers were employed in the mining and manufacturing industries in the mid-1920s. Since the primary processing of agricultural produce was prevalent in manufacturing, employment was chiefly seasonal. In *Syria* and *Lebanon* there were several hundred semi-artisan workshops where 20,000 to 25,000 workers were employed. In *Iraq* and *Palestine* industrial development had only just begun. In many Arab countries—*Saudi Arabia*, *Yemen*, *Transjordan*, *Libya*—there was no working class.

The working class of the *Union of South Africa* was the most important and the most highly organised section of the proletariat in Tropical Africa. At the beginning of the 1920s, there were about 900,000 workers there of whom 300,000 were employed in the mines, 200,000 in manufacturing and 400,000 in farming. The South African proletariat possessed a number of distinguishing features due to the historical and economic conditions of development in this British dominion. A significant stratum of the working class consisted of people who had originally come from Europe and America. The native

¹ Sh. M. Badi, *The Iranian Working Class*, Moscow, 1965, p. 92 (in Russian).

² See. N. I. Chernyakhovskaya, *Industrial Development and the Condition of the Working Class in Afghanistan*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian).

³ A. D. Davydov, *Socio-Economic Structure of the Village in Afghanistan (Specific Features of the Evolution)*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 240-43 (in Russian).

work force grew through the influx of immigrants chiefly from the neighbouring Portuguese and British colonies. The trade union movement among the workers of European origin first started up as far back as the 1830s. The Federation of Transvaal Trade Unions was established in 1911 and the South African Congress of Trade Unions in 1926.

The working class in other *countries of Tropical Africa* had only just begun to come into existence. On the eve of the Second World War the number of workers and office employees in countries south of the Sahara including the Union of South Africa totalled 3.6 million. There were 572,000 workers in Western Africa, 1.1 million in Eastern Africa, over 600,000 in Central Africa, and 1.3 million in Southern Africa.¹ A third of the total were employed in industry, transport and construction. A clear majority worked on plantations, in trade and in the service sector.

The incipient proletariat was dispersed, lacked cohesion and spoke many different languages. Migrant labour was an important factor in the formation of the working class in African countries. Every year tens and even hundreds of thousands of peasants left their villages and went to work for wages in neighbouring countries (in South Africa, Kenya, Tanganyika, the Ivory Coast and the Congo). After they had worked for a certain period of time in the plantations and mines owned by the colonialists, they returned home.

In some African colonies there were laws which imposed forced labour on the local population. Such a situation existed for example in colonial Angola where the authorities forced the people to work in colonialist enterprises in neighbouring countries (South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, the Congo, etc.) on the contract labour system whereby they received a certain sum of money for each contracted labourer. Most of this contract labour was used in agriculture and the mines.

Conditions for the African workers were extremely harsh. The colonialists paid the exploited workers a miserable amount of wages, the working day lasted for 10 to 12 hours, and the workers were kept under strict surveillance and regimentation. As a rule they worked in special reserves which were surrounded by barbed wire. Thousands of workers died on these colonial plantations and mines.

As a native African proletariat began to appear on the continent, trade unions also began to emerge. The first were established in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria in 1921. The Railway Workers' Union of Sierra Leone was formed in 1926 and the first trade union appeared in Gambia in 1933. Trade unions grew up in the British colonies of Eastern Africa in the 1920s-1930s. By the beginning of the

¹ *The African Working Class*, p. 10.

Second World War 14 trade unions existed in British African colonies.¹ The unions as a rule operated under the strict supervision of the colonial authorities.

Despite certain differences common of *the working class in Asia and Africa* was the fact that on the whole it remained a "class in itself". The level of political and class consciousness showed by the working masses was very weak. Workers employed in artisan workshops and manufactories, and farm hands and day labourers who endured both capitalist and pre-capitalist forms of exploitation made up about two-thirds of the army of wage labourers.

The whole process of the formation of the working class in the colonial and dependent countries of Asia and Africa occurred in extremely complex circumstances. Despite the increasingly rapid development of capitalism, pre-capitalist relationships—feudal, semi-feudal or even tribal—predominated in these countries in the 1920s-1930s. Emergent capitalism combined with the disintegration of previous modes of production, which affected the whole social structure of society.

The peasantry which constituted 80-90 per cent of the population was numerically the leading class in Asia and Africa. At the same time there was a fairly significant group of people who no longer possessed any means of production (former under-privileged members and servants of village community, debt slaves, members of subjugated tribes, etc.) in the colonial and dependent countries, especially in Asia. There was a steady inflow of ruined artisans and peasants into this group of people.

The strata deprived of the means of production were noticeable for their extremely low standard of living. Moreover, not only feudal but even pre-feudal relationships were a discernible feature of their exploitation. Employed only during periods of extremely intensive agricultural work and scraping a living from casual earnings during the rest of the year, they were unable to leave the village because of the persistence of traditional ties and indebtedness. With the development of capitalism it was from this section of the population that the body of hired workers was formed. It is possible to distinguish three groups of hired workers according to the nature of their employment.

The first group may be classified to include all those deprived of the means of production and employed on farms belonging to direct agricultural producers—they were chiefly day and seasonal agricultural workers. As Marx remarked in his time, "in the period of the disintegration of *pre-bourgeois* relationships free workers whose ser-

¹ M. I. Braginsky, *Formation of the African Proletariat*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 180-82 (in Russian).

VICES are bought not for purposes of consumption but for purposes of *production* appear sporadically; but ... even on a large scale this occurs only in the production of *direct* consumer values, and not values".¹

The great majority of agricultural workers (about three-quarters of the total) belonged to this category of people, comprising a kind of rural pre-proletariat. In other words the use of hired labour in the multi-structural colonial economy was not irrefutable proof of the capitalist nature of production and employment.

The second group comprised workers employed in small-scale industrial production which in the 1920s-1930s was still predominantly pre-capitalist or early capitalist in character. In regard to their social position they differed substantially from workers in capitalist enterprises, and were much more similar to West European workshop apprentices than to factory workers; there was not in this case a great deal of difference between the employer and the worker in regard to level of income and social position; the forms and conditions of employment were sanctified by tradition, and indeed not infrequently by religion; a fairly frequent transition from worker to independent producer or small-scale employer could be observed.

Most hired workers in Asia and Africa belonged to these two categories: in China and India alone they numbered several tens of millions. They represented a pre-proletariat bound by pre-capitalist relationships and often tied to their employers by archaic patriarchal clan, kinship, and local ties.

Workers employed in capitalist enterprises constituted the third group. Archaic patriarchal forms of exploitation and the lack of vocational training in modern means of production determined a whole number of specific features regarding the proletariat in colonial and dependent countries.

First of all, the low level of value of labour power was determined by the fact that the working class in Asia and Africa was formed from socially inferior strata (former slaves, prisoners of war, underprivileged members of village community, etc.) Unemployment also helped to create a discrepancy between the price and the value of labour. Along with the particular features of employment these factors underpinned the high turnover of labour due to illness, a high level of mortality, and the persisting maintenance of links with the village which helped to secure the means for supporting the workers' families. As a result the formation of a permanent proletariat was significantly slowed down.

Secondly, the development of capitalist entrepreneurship in the

¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf)* 1857-1858, Moscow, 1939, p. 373.

colonial periphery of imperialism led to the appearance of particular forms of employment. Since people who had no means of production could not leave the village because of the existence of traditional ties and an archaic psychology, capitalist entrepreneurs resorted widely to extra-economic pressure in order to secure labour. Contract labour was introduced through special laws: on obtaining employment a worker received an advance sum of money and signed a contract and could be punished under criminal law or fined for breaking it.

Contract employment led to the appearance of an intermediary between the entrepreneur and the worker—a contractor who recruited workers on the basis of an advance payment, delivered them to the enterprise and took responsibility for the worker reporting on the job and fulfilling the requirements. The contractor received the wages from the entrepreneur for all those workers whom he had recruited and then paid them. As a result the worker was subject to double exploitation—by the entrepreneur and the contractor. The contract system led to divisions among workers. They regarded the contractor rather than the owner of the enterprise as their immediate exploiter, and since there were several contractors at each enterprise this made unity of action among the workers an extremely difficult matter.

Thirdly, a low level of skills was typical of the working class in colonial and dependent countries. This was primarily due to the structure of capitalist production in this group of countries which was mainly represented by plantation agriculture, mining and to a lesser extent light industry, all of which did not demand the application of skilled labour. In turn the low level of skill and literacy made it difficult to increase the level of awareness among the working class and its organisation.

Fourthly, the proletariat in Asia and Africa experienced a specific sectoral structure of employment. The largest number of workers were those on plantations and capitalist farms, the second largest were railway and dock workers, and the third—those in capitalist industry. In only a few countries—India, China and Turkey—did industrial workers play a leading role.

The industrial proletariat was extremely scattered. In fact the transformation of this group of countries into sources of raw materials for the imperial countries led to the establishment of a large number of primary agricultural and mineral processing factories. The very nature of the technology employed demanded the establishment of comparatively small-scale enterprises located near the sources of raw materials, that is, in rural areas. In countries such as Indonesia, Ceylon, Burma, etc., the greater part of the industrial proletariat was concentrated in relatively small-scale enterprises sited in scattered rural areas.

This feature of employment reinforced the effects of traditional peasant psychology on the working class and made it difficult to establish mass working-class organisations. Yet at the same time, as a result of close contact between workers and peasants, opportunities were created for unity of action between the proletariat and the peasantry in the future.

Finally the working class in Asia and Africa had very diverse national and ethnic origins. Since the level of literacy and general development in the colonial and dependent countries was extremely low, skilled labour was recruited from the imperial countries with a view to reducing costs and frequently for political motives as well. Train drivers, telegraph workers, machine-tool fitters, etc., were recruited from the working class of the imperial countries. As a result, skilled and unskilled workers belonged to different nationalities.

Unskilled workers were also of diverse national and ethnic origin. The fact was that pre-capitalist modes of production in the colonial and dependent countries were disintegrating with different intensity. The disintegration was furthest advanced in India, China and Egypt. This explains why the colonialists began to import labour on a wide scale from these three countries for the construction of railways, highways and capitalist enterprises in the colonies. Millions of Indian workers were employed at foreign enterprises in South and South-East Asia, the Middle East, Oceania, Eastern Africa, the Union of South Africa, and the Caribbean countries; Chinese workers were recruited for countries in South-East Asia and Oceania while Egyptians were primarily employed in the Middle East and Tropical Africa.

As the traditional structures began to disintegrate and capitalism developed in Asia and Africa there appeared a surplus of local unskilled labour. Differences in customs, traditions, modes of behaviour, religion, etc., acted as a check on the formation and consolidation of the working class. Moreover national and ethnic differences in conditions of growing unemployment could always be used by the colonial authorities and the employers to undermine the working-class and national liberation movement.

Despite the difficulties and contradictions which have been noted, the 1920s-1930s were an important stage in the emergence of the proletariat in Asia and Africa. The increasingly rapid development of capitalism was accompanied on the one hand by an increase in the number of factory proletariat, its appearance in new, distant areas and a certain increase in the level of skills as new sectors of heavy industry began to arise, and on the other hand by the disintegration of traditional small-scale production, the creation of capitalist manufacturing and, consequently, the transformation of the pre-proletariat into the proletariat.

At the same time the fall in prices for raw materials during the

world economic crisis of 1929-1933 and in subsequent years led to the ruination of the peasantry. As a result, traditional relationships in the village were subverted and mass unemployment developed. This made non-economic pressures in the recruitment of labour unnecessary. And for this reason contract labour laws were repealed in the 1930s and the changeover was made to free employment. The use of female and child labour also declined as a result of unemployment and the associated further fall in the price of labour: in the new conditions the employer could buy the labour of an adult worker for practically the same price and was able to obtain greater surplus value.

Significant changes took place in the degree of organisation and level of consciousness of the working class. The activities of the communist parties in Asia and Africa, the continual support shown by the Comintern and the Trade Union International and the international communist movement as a whole, helped to bring this about.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Lenin's advice about the need for an alliance between the world proletariat and "the revolutionary and nationalist East" and preparation for the great battles and revolutions which were approaching in the East¹ formed the basis for the policy on the national liberation movement drawn up by the Comintern.

The national and colonial problem formed an important part of the work of the *5th Congress of the Comintern* (June-July 1924). D.Z. Manuilsky, a member of the delegation of the RCP(B), made the keynote report on the question to the plenary session. As he pointed out, there were three reasons for placing the national and colonial question on the agenda of the Comintern 5th Congress. "The first reason is because at the Second Congress ... we put forward for the first time the idea of the united revolutionary front between the proletariat and the oppressed nations and colonies. But we did not put into a concrete form (we could not do so because of lack of international experience) the method for establishing this united revolutionary front. In the course of the four years of our fight we collected enough data and material on the question to be able to come to some general conclusions. Moreover, many mistakes were made in a number of countries by our young communists' sections in this connection. It would be, perhaps, more to the point to say that some of our sections ignored this question altogether... Finally, during the period which has elapsed since the Second Congress an event of great political importance has taken place... the establishment in Soviet Russia of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an experiment of the solu-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 500.

tion of the national question under proletarian dictatorship in a peasant country comprising many nationalities."¹

The speaker noted that concrete experience of practical work had placed new tasks before Communists. Thus in a number of countries a tendency had emerged amongst broad masses of the working people to establish a workers' and peasants' party with a comparatively radical programme of struggle against imperialism. The Comintern proposed that Indonesian Communists should "take an active part in the work of the local workers' and peasants' party" and that the Chinese comrades should join the Kuomintang which would set this party on the path of more resolute struggles against imperialism. Manuilsky pointed out "the danger of ignoring the phenomena which are revolutionising the East", yet at the same time the impermissibility for communist parties "of losing their proletarian character by collaboration with the petty-bourgeoisie".²

The Indian Communist M. N. Roy criticised the speech which reflected the view of the Comintern Executive Committee and continued to uphold the thesis about the need to reject an alliance with the bourgeois-democratic, nationalist and anti-imperialist movement. The Comintern rejected these views. The 5th Congress showed convincingly that the Leninist guidelines on the national and colonial question were valid not just in the short term but for a significant historical period during which the nationalist movement in the oppressed countries would objectively retain its great anti-imperialist thrust.

Even then the Comintern documents which dealt with the problems of the national liberation and communist movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries paid a great deal of attention to prospects for the non-capitalist development of these countries. These prospects were linked to the possibility that national and revolutionary forces (popular but not as yet proletarian) would come to power. In this the Comintern was guided by the proposition that Lenin had set forth at the Second Congress concerning the possibility and desirability of the development by-passing capitalism. It also drew on the main points of Lenin's conversation with a delegation from the Mongolian People's Republic in 1921. In this conversation Lenin spoke about the impermissibility of any artificial transformation of a people's revolutionary party into a communist one: a proletarian mass was necessary for such a transformation to prove successful while to create such a mass in a country like Mongolia "the revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities". At the same time Lenin stressed that the prin-

¹ *Fifth World Congress of the Communist International, Abridged Report...* p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 188.

principal condition for ensuring a transition to non-capitalist development was a strengthening of work by the people's revolutionary party and government in creating a new economic structure, new forms of economic management and national culture.¹ These ideas were of tremendous importance not only for the Mongolian people who had started on the path of non-capitalist development but also for all anti-imperialist and national liberation movements.

The national and colonial question was subjected to a detailed analysis at the 5th enlarged plenary session of the Comintern Executive Committee in March-April 1925.

The Executive Committee stressed that at the historical level, the national liberation movement was on the uprise and that a certain lull in the East did not indicate any decline in the national liberation movement. At the same time it noted that the situation, in which it appeared that armed struggle to overthrow imperialism and establish worker and peasant power in the East was imminent, was a thing of the past.

The Comintern considered that the oppressed masses of the East who were beginning to take part in political life regarded the national struggle as the main path for their liberation and gradually, at a different pace in different countries, were beginning to join it; at the same time, depending on actual conditions and especially the class nature of the leadership, the national struggle was either revolutionary or reformist and had either a mass character or was relatively elitist.

Pointing to the enormous opportunities which were opening up before the communist parties of the oppressed countries when they took an active part in the national liberation struggle, the Executive Committee emphasised that, when the communist parties followed such a line, they created, on the one hand, necessary conditions for becoming leaders of the masses in future and, on the other, imparted to the national liberation movement a broad sweep and tremendous power, revolutionised it and helped the more determined anti-imperialist elements assume its leadership.

The Executive Committee put forward the slogan of setting up popular-revolutionary, popular and worker-peasant parties and oriented Communists in the East on working within these parties, yet preserving their own political independence, so as to transform them into political organisations of the anti-imperialist front.

Its plenary session adopted resolutions which presented an analysis of the political situation in India, Indonesia and Egypt and which contained recommendations on programme and tactical questions.

¹ See V. I. Lenin, "Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 361.

The session held the view that "the strengthening by British imperialism of its repressive policy against communist elements, the working-class movement and consistent nationalists, on the one hand, and contradictions within the national movement, on the other, have temporarily weakened the organised resistance of the Indian masses to British imperialism". Believing that this "does not mean either a defeat or the collapse of the national liberation movement in the country but merely a temporary crisis within the existing national parties", the session observed that "one of the most important tasks for our comrades in India at the present time is to undertake active work with a view to setting up a national liberation movement on the basis of a determined struggle for the independence of India". The session recommended that Communists would continue their work in the National Congress with a view to "establishing a mass national-revolutionary party and an all-Indian anti-imperialist bloc" and felt it necessary "to force the Indian bourgeoisie to carry through a more determined political struggle and support in every way its opposition to imperialism on the basis of a *united anti-imperialist front*". It saw "work to unite communist groups and elements into a strong party of the working class, into a communist party" as the principal task facing Indian Communists.¹

The resolution describing the situation in Indonesia stated: "Owing to the geographical isolation of Java and insufficient contact with the Communist International, certain leading Javanese comrades have continued until recently to use the slogan of Soviet power for Java, a slogan which could not rally the broad masses of the peasantry and the urban bourgeoisie around the national-revolutionary party Sarekat Rakjat." The session stressed that the Communist Party should "advance the slogan of establishing an anti-imperialist bloc of all national-revolutionary parties existing in Java". The Executive Committee expressed the opinion that the Communist Party of Indonesia should not get absorbed in Sarekat Rakjat.

Immediately after the 5th plenary session had finished its work the Comintern Executive Committee sent the resolution, with an explanation added, to the Indonesian Communists. Addressing the Indonesian Communists, the Comintern Executive Committee stressed: "By its composition and ideology Sarekat Rakjat is a petty-bourgeois organisation and as such should have a programme of national liberation and not a quasi-communist programme." Further it went on: "You will not be able to lead the national movement until you have a Communist Party with an iron discipline and with a clear Leninist understanding of the tasks of the struggle."

¹ *Communist International. A Short Historical Account*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 242-43 (in Russian).

At the same time the Executive Committee considered that the liquidationist intentions with regard to Sarekat Rakjat held by some Indonesian Communists were incorrect. When the decisions of the December 1924 Conference of the Communist Party of Indonesia which, in effect, envisaged the disbandment of Sarekat Rakjat became known, the Comintern Executive Committee sent a letter to the leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia in which it criticised this decision and recommended that the Indonesian Communist Party leadership should take steps to transform Sarekat Rakjat into an organisationally independent national revolutionary party. In its decision of 17 September 1926, the Executive Committee stressed: "Indonesia belongs to that group of countries in which the Communist Party should construct its tactics on the basis of a revolutionary bloc with left national elements, and rely, apart from the workers, also on the broad sections of the rural and peasant population and farm labourers and secure the participation of the handicraftsmen, the intelligentsia and democratic sections of the native bourgeoisie."¹ The resolution pointed out that one of the most important tasks facing the Communist Party was to consolidate all national revolutionary elements in the country and set up a united national front while fully preserving the Party's organisational and political independence. The demand for national independence formed a central point in the recommended programme of action. The decision noted that the liberation movement in Indonesia would achieve victory only through revolution. At the same time, this programme did not suggest an armed uprising as an immediate course of action. The decision indicated that the Communist Party should undertake careful, detailed work so that an uprising would not be doomed to defeat through lack of preparation and the Party should not try to leap over the national democratic stage of the revolution since this would lose it the support of the masses.

However, when, in November 1926, the uprising against the Dutch colonialists became a fact the Comintern acted to organise a movement of solidarity by the proletariat and broad strata of working people with the heroic insurgents. Later on the Comintern gave Indonesian Communists a great deal of help in restoring the Party which had been smashed as a result of the defeat of the uprising. It frequently came out in support of the non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces in Indonesia which tended increasingly to favour the establishment of a united front with the Communists as the influence of the revolutionary-democratic wing was consolidated and broadened.

In working out its tactical line in regard to the Chinese Revolu-

¹ See *The Comintern and the East. A Critique of the Critique*, Moscow, 1981, p. 393.

tion, the Comintern found the correct approach to a series of theoretical and practical problems which for the first time fully confronted the communist movement in the East. It regarded the Kuomintang at that time not as an ordinary bourgeois party but as a political bloc, a broad organisation inside which there was a struggle between different class and political forces. It is for this reason that it felt it was possible not only for the Communist Party to cooperate with the Kuomintang but for Communists to join it.

Questions concerning the Comintern's strategy and tactics with regard to the national and colonial question occupied an important place in the work of its *6th Congress* in August-September 1928. The Congress theses correctly observed that in upholding their class interests against imperialism, the bourgeoisie in the colonies thereby also upheld national interests and that there was no reason to regard the whole of the national bourgeoisie as embracing anti-national, comprador positions.

Congress decisions pointed to the need to take account of specific national features in each country in determining the tasks of Communists in the national liberation movement: "In order correctly to determine the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement it is important as a starting point to take into consideration the degree of maturity attained by the movement in the separate colonial countries."¹

The decisions also included a number of important statements which stressed the danger of leaping over an unaccomplished stage of the revolution and noted the difference that existed between the forces of bourgeois national reformism and the feudal imperialist camp; national-revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties were at this stage regarded as allies of the revolution. They stated that the creation of genuinely proletarian parties in the backward countries was a task of primary importance for national liberation movements.² These important decisions had a positive impact on the development of the revolutionary struggle in the colonies. At the same time the Sixth Congress put forward a number of mistaken proposals. For example, the struggle to overcome petty-bourgeois influences amongst the masses was prematurely declared to be the priority task. Underlying these guidelines was the comparatively widespread view that the national bourgeoisie had on the whole lost its importance as a force fighting against imperialism and that political differentiation among classes had reached such a level that the masses of the peasant-

¹ *Thesis on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies, Adopted by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, 1928, London, 1929, p. 30.*

² *Documents of the Communist International, 1919-1932, Moscow, 1933, pp. 832-70 (in Russian).*

ry and the semi-proletarian strata in the towns were ready to go over to the side of the working class and stand in opposition to the national bourgeoisie.

The 1930s were a period of sharp anti-imperialist struggle in the colonial and dependent countries. Numerous anti-imperialist groups and organisations—communist, national-revolutionary, national-reformist, etc.—took part in this movement. In the struggle against imperialism national bourgeois circles were inclined towards a reformist policy and compromise agreements. However, as the anti-imperialist movement of the masses grew the national-bourgeois parties tried hard to take control of it, to lead it and use it in order to win concessions from the colonialists. They frequently tried to take control of and restrain popular actions which could threaten the class privileges of the local bourgeoisie. Prejudice against communist parties was discernible among bourgeois nationalists, at times even growing to militant anti-communism. Right-wing national-bourgeois groupings which were linked with the big bourgeoisie showed a tendency to making deals with domestic feudal elements and at times with the colonialists.

Parties which were petty-bourgeois in their composition and leadership bore all the characteristic marks of this social stratum. They undertook joint actions with workers and were capable of adopting quite radical political programmes including those tinged with socialist ideas. A notable feature of petty-bourgeois radical democracy in a number of countries (India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma) was the interest shown in Marxism-Leninism by its more advanced members which brought many of them into the ranks of the communist movement. However, left nationalists by no means always marched in step with the working masses. National-revolutionary organisations not infrequently showed a lack of firmness in the struggle, were inclined to take unconsidered impulsive actions, were vulnerable to propaganda in favour of national, racial or religious exclusiveness, and at times were inclined towards political adventurism and towards terrorist methods of struggle.

Revolutionary tendencies increased in the liberation movement in the East in view of the unprecedented hardships suffered by the masses during the world economic crisis of 1929-1933 and the resulting sharply increased dissatisfaction. At the same time the treachery of the Kuomintang leadership in 1927 caused serious doubts as to whether it was possible in future to regard the bourgeois national movement in China and a number of other countries as a possible ally in the struggle against imperialism. All this fed sectarian tendencies in the young and inexperienced communist parties in the East.

The policy adopted by several communist parties in the East, pursuing a struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of the work-

ing class and peasantry and breaking with national-bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political organisations, had a negative effect on the results of individual actions undertaken by the oppressed masses. At the same time this struggle served as a proving ground for tactical guidelines and slogans advanced by communist parties, enabling them to identify and overcome errors and develop a strategy and tactics corresponding to the concrete historical and local conditions in each country in line with Marxism-Leninism. The peoples of Africa and Asia learned a great deal from the successes and failures of the national liberation movement in the early 1930s. The experience of individual communist parties and the Comintern as a whole was also enriched. The lessons of these years were subsequently analysed, generalised and served as a basis for further development and improvement of communist strategy and tactics, in particular the strategy and tactics of a united national anti-imperialist front.

The following picture of the communist movement in Asia and Africa emerged from a survey the Bureau of the Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee published in July 1935 for the 7th Congress of the Comintern.¹ The Communist Party of Indonesia still had not re-established itself as an organisational unit after its defeat in 1926; the Communist Party of Indo-China was driven deep underground; the Communist Party of the Philippines was smashed soon after its foundation and its leaders were thrown into prison; the Communist Party of India had comparatively little influence among the masses although this began to grow after the formation of a united trade union front; the Communist Party of Turkey was a small group which began to work in the legal trade unions only from 1932 on; Communists in Korea had still not re-established their own party and remained few in numbers; the Communist Party of Palestine did not have a serious mass base; the Communist organisation of Tunisia was only an association of several groups of European workers; Communists in Egypt formed a small group which was subject to systematic attacks from the police; Communists in Iran who led workers' strikes in conditions of harsh terror found themselves in the same position; the Communist Party of Algeria had begun to gain influence among the broad masses of Arab workers; the Communist Party of Syria from 1933 on worked to win influence among the masses, began to appear in the vanguard of strikes and strengthened its positions in the trade unions. China was the only country in the East where there was a mass and influential Communist Party.

In the mid-1930s the Comintern put forward the task of creating a united anti-imperialist front in the colonial and dependent countries.

¹ See *The Communist International before the 7th World Congress (Documents)*, Moscow, 1935 (in Russian).

On the eve of its 7th Congress the magazine *Communist International* published an article which outlined the basic principles of the political line followed by Communists on the national and colonial question in the new conditions of struggle.¹

The article noted that feudal comprador elements used by imperialism in the fight against the national bourgeoisie were the main support of imperialism in the backward countries. The national bourgeoisie did not represent a solid undifferentiated mass either economically or politically; left-wing trends detached themselves from national-reformist parties and developed in the direction of national-revolutionary positions. Moreover, at times national-reformist organisations, too, tended to support the peoples' struggle when the national liberation movement was on the uprise or imperialism was on the attack.

The article criticised the views according to which the national-reformist bourgeoisie's support of the liberation struggle was only a manoeuvre in order to prevent the masses from going over to the side of the communist party. "In the first place," the article stated, "this represents the class position of the national bourgeoisie, a position of vacillating between imperialism and national revolution." Left-wing groupings in national-reformist parties could become a bridge towards the revolution for the masses. "Nothing could be more mistaken," it went on, "than to hold the view that the proletariat 'will lose its hegemony' (which, moreover, it has not yet won) if Communists enter into temporary agreement with national-reformist organisations or form a closer bloc with national-revolutionary parties in the struggle against imperialism while maintaining (as the basic condition for these agreements!) their organisational and political independence." On these grounds the article concluded: "A refusal to implement the tactics of the united national front on the pretext of those dangers which joint action with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism involves is in reality a refusal to prepare national liberation revolutions and inevitably leads to the isolation of communist parties from the broad popular movement."

Finally, the magazine wrote, when they put forward their independent agrarian programme the communist parties should not at this stage make acceptance of confiscation of landowners' land without compensation a condition for an anti-imperialist agreement with national-revolutionaries and national-reformists.

In Dimitrov's report to the 7th Congress of the Comintern Indian Communists were recommended to work inside the Indian National Congress, facilitating the crystallisation of its national-revolutionary wing; in China Communists were recommended to try and achieve

¹ *Kommunisticheskoy Internatsional*, No. 20-21, 1935, pp. 103-11.

"a most extensive anti-imperialist united front against Japanese imperialism and its Chinese agents", where the Communists could join up "with all those organised forces existing on the territory of China which are ready to wage a real struggle for the salvation of their country and their people".¹

The resolution of the 7th Congress clearly posed the task of active participation by communist parties in mass anti-imperialist movements led by national-reformists and of organisation of joint anti-imperialist actions on the basis of concrete programmes.²

During this period the Comintern issued guidelines for communist parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries on the struggle to establish a popular revolutionary anti-imperialist government. It was assumed that in the majority of cases this would not be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, since other classes taking part in the struggle for national liberation would be represented in it.

After the 7th Congress the drive for united action of all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces against fascism, war and colonial oppression formed the basic tactic of all communist parties and within a short space of time brought great success. Anti-imperialist unity of action built up in the mid-1930s in many colonial and dependent countries led to the revitalisation of the national liberation movement, played an important role in consolidating the international front of democratic and anti-fascist forces, and helped to strengthen the position of communist parties which increasingly became the real vanguard in the struggle of the peoples for national liberation, democracy and peace.

Lenin's strategic and tactical line on the national and colonial question found its most complete expression in the decisions taken by the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. This line which had been enriched by 20 years' experience of hard struggle against imperialism, the experience of great victories and heavy defeats, played an exceptionally important role in developing the mass anti-imperialist movement in the colonial and dependent countries.

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

The working-class movement in the colonial and dependent countries of Asia and Africa was closely linked to the general struggle for national independence. Actions undertaken by the proletariat were directed against colonial oppression and the political and economic domination of imperialism in the colonies and dependent countries,

¹ VII Congress of the Communist International. *Abridged Stenographic Report of Proceedings*, Moscow, 1939, p. 173.

² *Ibid.*, p. 583.

and inevitably led to a confrontation above all with foreign monopolies and the colonial administration.

The working-class struggle added militancy to the national liberation movement and laid a certain imprint on the development of national liberation revolutions in the course of which specifically proletarian methods of struggle were often used. In those colonies and semi-colonies which already had a fairly numerous working class and their own communist parties the struggle of the proletariat also pursued the aims of social emancipation.

China stood out among those countries in Asia and Africa where an exceptionally powerful upsurge of the national liberation and working-class movement could be observed after the Socialist Revolution in Russia. In 1923 Sun Yatsen's national-revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, and the Communist Party of China reached an agreement on unity of action while preserving their political and organisational independence. This political bloc was formed as the result of a compromise decision on the individual acceptance of members of the Communist Party and the Socialist Youth League into the Kuomintang and the simultaneous reorganisation of the latter.

The renewal of the Kuomintang was officially confirmed in decisions at its 1st Congress which took place with the participation of Communists in January 1924 in Canton, capital of the Southern Chinese province of Guangdong (Canton). The Congress introduced substantial changes into the party's approach to its ideological foundations—Sun Yatsen's "three popular principles" of nationalism, people's power and people's well-being, giving them a much more precise anti-imperialist and democratic interpretation. It adopted a minimum programme which envisaged the abrogation of all unequal treaties, the holding of general elections and the introduction of democratic liberties, an improvement in the living conditions of peasants and workers, measures to help them organise, the drafting of labour legislation, equality for women, universal education, and the right of the state to purchase land and to acquire monopoly enterprises and enterprises of national importance with a view to restricting capital. While declaring its intention of "relying on the peasantry and working class of the country" the Kuomintang Congress expressed its readiness to collaborate on the basis of this general political platform with all other participants "in the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist revolution".¹ The party was significantly re-structured and took over certain organisational principles from the communist movement. Communists became members of the Kuomintang leading bodies.

¹ Sun Yatsen, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 329-412 (in Russian translation).

The decisions of the Kuomintang's 1st Congress in fact laid the foundation for a united national anti-imperialist front. However, from its inception there was a continually growing tension within the front due to its heterogeneous class composition. Nevertheless, its formation was a tremendous success for the revolutionary forces in China, accelerating the involvement of broad masses in the political struggle.

The reorganisation of the Kuomintang gave a fresh impetus to the working-class movement in Canton. The main aim of the Kuomintang working-class policy was to organise workers with a view to drawing them into the struggle with imperialism and to mobilise the masses politically in support of the anti-imperialist and partly anti-militarist actions of the Kuomintang government.

The Kuomintang willingly gave its support to workers' anti-imperialist actions and at times even came out as initiator, organiser or intermediary (for example, during the strike in the Anglo-French concession in Canton in 1924 and during the famous Hong Kong-Canton strike of 1925-1926).

A number of progressive reforms were implemented on the Kuomintang-controlled territory. The Kuomintang's political programme published in the Manifesto of its 1st Congress promised the working people a labour legislation, better living conditions, protection to working-class organisations and assistance in their development.¹ Working people were granted formal social and political equality with other dominant social strata; a fairly broad range of civil liberties existed—freedom of speech and of the press, the right of assembly and the right to organise; labour unions and peasant unions enjoyed the protection of the Kuomintang which sought to place them under its control and rely on them in the struggle against imperialism and the northern warlords; workers also received the same rights as peasants, entrepreneurs and landowners to set up armed self-defence units which were used by the Kuomintang as an extra military reserve in putting down counter-revolution and undertaking certain anti-imperialist actions.

Nevertheless, the basic principles underlying the Kuomintang's social programme were class collaboration, rejection of class struggle, regulation of social conflicts from above, and government control of the functioning of public organisations and trade unions. The Kuomintang stressed that social reforms should be implemented not in the course of a national revolution but only after its future political victory.

Despite its moderation, the Kuomintang labour policy obviously had a revolutionising effect. However, from the very beginning its

¹ Sun Yatsen, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

practical implementation came up against a whole number of obstacles. In practice the Kuomintang took no serious measures to improve the economic situation of the proletariat or indeed of any other strata of working people. Most of the Kuomintang leaders in the central and local bodies did not feel themselves bound by the revolutionary pledges contained in their own party's programme or else gave them a hostile reception. Sun Yatsen and Liao Zhongkai were exceptions to this rule.

The priority task for Liao Zhongkai, who relied on a small group of Communists, was to try and overcome the political indifference and fragmentation of the working-class movement, to draw workers into political struggle under anti-imperialist slogans and organise and unite them under a centralised leadership. Organisational problems came to the forefront—the drive to centralise the trade union movement and against autonomist tendencies.

A conference of working-class delegates was convened on 8 May 1924 in Canton, attended by representatives of 58 labour unions, clubs and societies representing more than 100,000 organised workers, craftsmen and clerks.¹ Resolutions adopted at the conference envisaged the setting up of union-sponsored retail stores, complaints committees and schools for workers, the negotiation of contracts for workers without the participation of middlemen, a 9 hours' ceiling on the working day for apprentices without any loss of pay, and equal pay for equal work. A special resolution demanded that the government prohibit interference by the merchant militia in the affairs of labour unions and that it allow workers to set up their own self-defence units. Resolutions on organisational matters spoke of the need to establish industrial trade unions and to overcome the fragmentation caused by craft unionism. The most important organisational decision was the one setting up a council of workers' delegates. Its executive committee consisted of 21 people including two Communists; its chairman was Liao Zhongkai who headed the labour department of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee. The intention was to extend this centralised structure over all working-class organisations in Canton and at some future date over the whole of China. This idea met with failure. Right-wing leaders prevented the unification and centralisation of the trade union movement in Canton.

Shortly after the May conference workers' militia units began to be set up which were officially called the workers' militia corps. As their regulations stated, they were set up to help the government put down counter-revolution and to defend workers and trade unions.² This was a completely new development in China.

¹ M. Alsky, *Canton Is Victorious*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 26-27 (in Russian).

² "Regulations of the Cantonese Workers' Army", *Working-Class China in the Struggle against Imperialism*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 165-66 (in Russian).

The conference organised by the Trade Union International for transport workers from Pacific Ocean countries at the end of June 1924 in Canton also helped to strengthen the revolutionary anti-imperialist stand of the working-class movement in the province of Guangdong. Delegates representing transport workers in the Philippines and Java, railway workers in North China, seamen in Canton and Hong Kong, and also representatives of the Comintern G. Voitinsky and the TUI Leo Heller took part. The conference was held under anti-imperialist slogans which were in accord with the Kuomintang programme and the general direction of the working-class movement of China.

These events helped to give new life to the working-class movement in Canton for a short period of time. In June 1924 there was a series of economic strikes which achieved a rise in wages for several categories of workers. A particularly vivid episode occurred in 1924 and the first half of 1925 when there was a strike in the Anglo-French concession which was supported by the Sun Yatsen government and which took on the character of an anti-imperialist demonstration.

Up until the autumn of 1924 the working-class movement in Guangdong had no legal status. In October 1924 a Statute on Trade Unions¹ was published which recognised their legality, their independence and their equality with employers' organisations. Trade unions were given the right to conclude collective agreements with employers, to declare strikes and conduct negotiations on settling conflicts, to own property and to organise on the industrial principle. At the same time the law contained elements of governmental control over labour organisations (compulsory registration of unions, regular presentation of accounts to local authorities, the possibility of enforced arbitration), which became increasingly harsh in later Kuomintang labour legislation.² The 1924 law on trade unions was the maximum which was done for the working-class movement by the Sun Yatsen government. At the same time the employers' organisations also enjoyed full freedom in Canton; they often attacked the trade unions, broke up strikes and declared lock-outs.

In late 1924 and early 1925 a new patriotic upsurge gathered strength in China. A coup d'état in Peking and the defeat of the largest clique of warlords headed by Cao Kun and Wu Peifu helped further disorganisation in the reactionary camp. Sun Yatsen's campaign for power to be handed over to the democratic National Assembly and the victories won by the Kuomintang forces strengthened the position of the Guangdong revolutionary base and increased resistance

¹ *Kuomintang Congresses and Conferences*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 43-49 (in Russian).

² V. I. Khorkov, *The Nanking Kuomintang and the Labour Question, 1927-1932*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 63-75 (in Russian).

by the national bourgeoisie and the working class in the face of the attack by foreign capital.

Consequently, a new situation arose in North China. Power in Peking passed into the hands of an ill-assorted coalition of warlords which was so unstable that it had to resort to political manoeuvring and in particular to make contact with progressive forces. Dissension in the reactionary camp opened up possibilities for the regeneration of the working-class movement and the re-establishment of trade unions which had been smashed in early 1923 in the north and centre of the country.

A new wave of strikes broke out in early 1925. In February there were major demonstrations in Shanghai involving over 40,000 workers employed at 22 Japanese textile factories, while in April and May 10,000 textile workers employed at Japanese factories in Qingdao went on strike. The strikes began spontaneously as an economic movement of protest against the tyranny of foreign supervisors, sackings and worsening conditions of work, and then quickly became anti-imperialist in character and gained support from broad strata of the population, including the bourgeoisie. Brief economic strikes took place in the first half of 1925 in Wuhan, Peking, Tangshan, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Changsha, Nanking and other towns.

The wave of strike action increased trade union activity and stimulated the organisational work of Communists among workers. In May 1925, the 2nd Congress of Chinese Trade Unions representing 540,000 organised workers was convened in Canton on the initiative of the Communist Party of China. It took a decision to set up an All-China Federation of Trade Unions which would be affiliated to the Trade Union International. Communists such as Lin Weimin, Liu Shaoqi, Liu Wensong, Deng Zhongxia won major influence in the ACFTU's Executive Committee. In subsequent class and national liberation battles the ACFTU invariably acted as leader of the left wing of the working-class movement.

In the summer of 1925, mass anti-imperialist demonstrations remembered in history as the 30th of May Movement took place in China. Major events were the general anti-imperialist strike in Shanghai in June to September 1925 and the anti-British Hong Kong-Canton strike in June 1925 to October 1926. They were triggered off by repression and armed reprisals against participants in anti-imperialist demonstrations in Qingdao, Shanghai and Canton, by an attempt to overthrow the Canton revolutionary government and the threat of foreign military intervention. These strikes were initiated by Communists; in Shanghai they were supported by the Chamber of Commerce and other organisations of the Chinese bourgeoisie and in Hong Kong and Canton, by the Kuomintang government of the South.

The coordinating body for the movement in Shanghai was the Joint

Committee of workers, traders and students which put forward a series of anti-imperialist demands including the right to organise trade unions and strikes. Strike actions were guided by the General Council of Trade Unions of Shanghai led by the Communists Li Lisan, Liu Shaoqi and others. The General Council brought together workers from 108 foreign and 11 Chinese enterprises. Under pressure from the imperialists and the local warlords who declared martial law in the city, the strikes gradually petered out. The workers of Shanghai suffered a defeat but were not disorganised. Despite the repression (the closing down of the GCTU, and the arrest and murder of trade union leaders) and a drop in the number of trade unions, the basic working-class organisations in Shanghai stood their ground and soon renewed the struggle. The general political strike in Shanghai signalled the beginning of the national revolution of 1925-1927.

Broad cooperation between the strikers and the southern Kuomintang government was a remarkable feature of the Hong Kong-Canton boycott strike which began on 19 June 1925. The strikers won the right to full self-government under the leadership of an assembly of delegates and a strike committee and under the general supervision of the local authorities. For its part, the strike committee organised a boycott of British goods and the blockade of Hong Kong with the help of armed pickets. It also undertook to accommodate and feed strikers in Canton. Essentially the strike committee fulfilled the functions of a semi-government body. Its activities formed an integral part of the liberation struggle in the south of the country.

The Hong Kong-Canton strike was a serious blow at British imperialism in China and strengthened working-class organisations in the South and their influence. As a result of the Kuomintang government's support for the strike, the position of the Canton revolutionary base and the authority of the Kuomintang were strengthened. On 1 July, the Kuomintang government, whose authority extended so far only to the province of Guangdong, declared itself the national government of the Chinese republic whose official aim was to overthrow the northern warlords and unite the whole of China under its authority.

The events of 1925 in China brought a broad response from the working class throughout the world. Large Hands Off China meetings and demonstrations were held in the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, France, Austria, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Korea, India, Egypt, Turkey and other countries. Participants protested against intervention by the imperialist powers in China's internal affairs. Money for the strike fund came from Soviet workers, from the Berlin society for assistance to the international labour movement, the International Workers' Relief, the French Workers' Union (UTF), etc. The Comintern, the TUI and other international labour organi-

sations played an extremely important role in organising practical help for the Chinese people. This was a vivid demonstration of international solidarity.

In July 1926 the southern Kuomintang government declared war on the Peking government of northern warlords. The famous Northern March of the National Revolutionary Army had begun. Soviet political and military advisors who were fulfilling their internationalist duty to the Chinese revolution made a considerable contribution to the success of the Northern March. The March gave rise to a new revolutionary upsurge in the country. At the end of its first stage (July 1926-March 1927), the power of the southern Kuomintang revolutionary government extended over nearly half the country (including Wuhan and Shanghai), the most highly developed part in socio-economic and political terms. The Kuomintang's final victory over the northern warlords became merely a question of time.

As the class struggle grew, contradictions inside the united front became sharper. The pre-eminence of the military factor was a noticeable feature throughout the Chinese revolution. At the same time, in the course of the events of 1925-1927 a new stable phenomenon came into existence, the symbiosis of the party and the army in the political leadership and the state administration. In the Kuomintang the military dictatorial grouping led by the NRA commander-in-chief, Chiang Kaishek was noticeably gaining supremacy, gradually taking over the party and the state apparatus. For this reason the working-class movement during the Northern March developed in extremely contradictory circumstances.

One of the most important reasons for the victories won by the NRA was the support given it by workers and peasants and these in turn created favourable conditions for brief upsurges in the mass movement on the liberated territory. Like other rival Kuomintang groups the Chiang Kaishek group was obliged to make concessions to the masses for the sake of military successes on the Northern March and in their struggle for power, to allow a mass movement to develop and to continue cooperation with the Communists.

However, right after its first major military and political victories the Kuomintang leadership switched over to merciless suppression of the peasant movement, to establishing harsh control over the working-class movement and to smashing its Communist-led left wing.

During the first stage of the March the working-class movement experienced a stormy upsurge. By the spring of 1927, the trade unions registered a membership of about 3 million, that is double the number in July 1926. Wuhan and Shanghai became the main centres of the working-class movement and it was here that the centre of political struggle shifted from Canton towards the end of 1926. However,

the movement was still marked by the lack of cohesion, by conflicts and struggle among trade unions, and by a shortage of experienced leaders and their isolation from the masses. Communists tried to head the struggle of the proletariat but clearly failed to keep up with the pace and scope of the mass movement.

During this period there was a close link between economic and political demands put forward in the course of workers' actions against foreign capital. Workers did not simply seek economic and legal concessions and improvements, but took an active part in such major political actions as the seizure of British concessions in Hankou and Jiujiang and in the general political strikes and uprisings in Shanghai in February and March 1927.

There was a rather different situation in national Chinese enterprises. Here workers came into direct conflict not only with large-scale and medium-scale but even with the petty bourgeoisie. For this reason, in the interests of preserving a united national front the Communist Party had even to restrain the workers' economic demands.

The most vivid incidents during this period were the armed uprisings by workers in Shanghai aimed to help the NRA liberate the city. The Communist Party played a vanguard role in organising these uprisings in the hope that it would thereby strengthen the influence of the proletariat on the course of the political struggle within the united front and would halt the Kuomintang leadership's slide towards a military dictatorship. In March 1927, NRA units were already approaching the city. On 21 March, Communists acting in contact with the Kuomintang and the local bourgeoisie declared a general strike which grew into an armed uprising. By the evening of 22 March, the Chinese quarters of the town were in the hands of the insurgents, whereupon Chiang Kaishek's forces entered Shanghai.

Alarmed by the successes of the revolutionary forces in China, the imperialists threatened direct military intervention. On 24 March 1927, the Anglo-American squadron bombarded Nanking taken by the NRA the day before. On 11 April, representatives of imperialist powers delivered an ultimatum to the Chinese authorities demanding an end to anti-foreign demonstrations. Anti-Soviet provocations were also engineered (an armed raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking, blockade of the Soviet General Consulate in Shanghai, the sinking of a Soviet ship and the arrest of its crew, etc.). Military pressure from outside was accompanied by intensive subversive activity by imperialist agents inside the united front, who tried to push the Kuomintang leadership into anti-Sovietism and anti-communism. These manoeuvres corresponded to the way of thinking of Kuomintang leaders who were grouped around the NRA commander-in-chief Chiang Kaishek. They saw a direct threat to their class interests in mass demonstrations by the workers and therefore demanded a speedy sup-

pression of the working-class and peasant movement and an end to the alliance with the Communists.

On 12 April 1927, Chiang Kaishek carried out a counter-revolutionary military coup in Shanghai and similar coups occurred in April to July 1927 in all the provinces occupied by Kuomintang forces. The Kuomintang's recent ally, the Communist Party, and all those working-class, peasant and other mass organisations which were aligned with it were declared illegal. A campaign of terror was launched against Communists and leaders of the labour and peasant movement. The movement suffered great losses and its left wing was enervated and disorganised.

A dictatorship of the Kuomintang expressing the interests of the counter-revolutionary strata of the bourgeoisie and the landowners was established in the country. While relying chiefly on its military strength, it also had recourse to social manoeuvring under the banner of Great Power Chinese nationalism.

In the period leading up to and during the national revolution of 1925 to 1927 the Chinese working-class movement developed within the framework of a united anti-imperialist front led by the Kuomintang in cooperation with the Communists. In its activities, the Communist Party maintained a predominantly realistic and critical approach to the Kuomintang's political programme and tactics and sought to push the Kuomintang to the left, to draw it into closer contact with the popular masses and with the Chinese and international proletariat. During the entire existence of the first united front, the Communist Party upheld the principles of the ideological, political and organisational independence of the proletariat in the national liberation struggle in accordance with the general line taken by the Comintern on the national and colonial question. However, this principle of the independence of the proletariat was often interpreted by some leaders of the Communist Party of China in a left-sectarian spirit.

In the spring and summer of 1927, after a series of coups by the Kuomintang military clique, the Communist Party decided to steer for an agrarian revolution and an armed rebuff to the reactionaries. In the course of military action in Nanchan on 1 August 1927 and the "Autumn Harvest Uprisings" in villages to set up working people's councils (Soviets), the Communist Party managed to form the first units of the Chinese Red Army and partisan bases in rural areas in the southern part of the country. At the same time it took the decision based on an incorrect evaluation of the actual situation to organise immediate uprisings in the towns. These uprisings organised by small groups of Party and labour activists in Canton, Hankou, Wuxi, Changsha, Kaifen and other district centres were not supported by the masses and ended in defeat. The positions held by the Communist Party in working-class circles were still further weakened.

Between 1928 and 1930, the Party put in a great deal of effort to revive the revolutionary trade union movement but met with failure. Membership of the Red trade unions established by Communists in completely underground conditions numbered 3 to 4 thousand throughout China in the middle of 1930. The left-adventurist line taken by Li Lisan struck a serious blow at the already insignificant strength of the Party in the towns. Under the banner of preparing an uprising on a nationwide scale the Li Lisan leadership merged the Party, Young Communist League and trade union organisations in the towns into "Action Committees", which in practice led to the liquidation of the Red trade unions and made it easier for the Kuomintang's secret police to uncover illegal Party cells. The Party almost completely lost contact with the urban working masses for many years, maintaining certain positions in the towns only amongst left-radical intelligentsia and students. In the 1930s, it concentrated its work in the villages where, during the long years of guerilla warfare, the armed forces of the Chinese revolution were formed. Guerilla action by Communists forced the Kuomintang authorities to take account of the mood of the working class, to legalise working-class organisations and make other concessions to the workers. At the same time, the working-class movement which at times escaped from the strict confines of governmental restrictions undermined the stability of the Kuomintang regime and increased social ferment throughout the country, thereby attracting a significant share of Kuomintang repression force and easing the situation of the Communist Party guerilla bases.

The high level of political activity of the working class in the revolution of 1925-1927 forced the Kuomintang government to pay serious attention to the labour problem. By combining harsh anti-communist terror with widescale social demagoguery and some real concessions to the working class, the Kuomintang tried to completely subordinate the working class ideologically, politically and organisationally, to root out communist influence among the working masses, and to make workers a social factor supporting their anti-popular regime. This was a policy of national-reformism based on class peace and collaboration between labour and capital.

One of the first measures undertaken by the new Kuomintang authorities was to purge the trade unions and give them a good shake up. As a result, the revolutionary trade unions, established and formerly led by Communists, were replaced by government-controlled union bodies, and yellow trade unions were galvanised into action, maintaining a formal independence of the local authorities. At the same time, national, regional and industrial union associations were abolished and the unions were split up on the craft principle of organisation.¹ The Kuomintang also managed to realign the Chinese

¹ V. I. Khorkov, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-84.

labour's international ties: the Association of Labour joined the Amsterdam International.

The Kuomintang, however, was not strong enough to oppose the workers' desire for unity. Many urban union centres continued to function without the sanction of the authorities. In 1932, workers managed to obtain official approval for the organisation of an Association of Trade Unions of Shanghai, and in 1935 they set up the Chinese Association of Labour which took in the country's major legal unions. It was headed by Zhu Xiuefan, a progressive leader of the Kuomintang trade union movement.

At the end of the 1920s and early 1930s, the Kuomintang enacted labour legislation which gave legal recognition to the main demands advanced by the working class during the revolution of 1925-1927: the right to organise and to strike and equal representation in the settlement of disputes between workers and employers, the 8-hour working day, annual holidays and regular days off, a wage minimum, and restrictions on the exploitation of child and female labour and on arbitrary hiring and firing by employers. At the same time this legislation was clearly of a restrictive character and acted as a control device. With its help the Kuomintang made the unions completely dependent on the authorities, severely restricted strike action through compulsory arbitration and impeded the industrial and regional association of workers and expression of class solidarity.¹ On all basic issues affecting the working-class movement the Kuomintang took the side of the employers. At the same time, in order to win the trust and support of the workers it somewhat restrained the appetite of the national and foreign bourgeoisie. The Kuomintang authorities often encouraged and supported labour action at foreign enterprises so as to weaken the position of foreign capital, but kept a strict check to ensure that labour's anti-imperialist struggle did not escape from their control.

For a time the Kuomintang managed to subordinate the working-class movement to its influence, to significantly weaken the unions, restrict their functions and create a semblance of "class peace" in the country. Between 1928 and 1930, the working-class movement experienced a decline: the number of strikes and strikers dropped from year to year, and the majority of strikes ended in defeat for the workers.

The movement became active again in connection with the start of armed aggression by Japan in China in September 1931. Realising that the Kuomintang government was incapable of effectively repulsing Japanese aggression, the Chinese proletariat gradually freed it-

¹ V. I. Khorkov, op. cit., pp. 112-30.

self from reformist illusions and increased its political activities. Anti-Japanese strikes flared up in Shanghai, Hankou, Qingdao and other towns. Workers joined the Associations of National Salvation which sprang up everywhere, took part in the numerous anti-Japanese meetings and demonstrations, and set up volunteer armed units. Shanghai again became the centre of the anti-imperialist struggle. Dozens of volunteer units took part in the heroic defence of Shanghai in January to March 1932, while workers at Japanese enterprises in the city declared a general strike.

The trade unions were giving up their allegiance to the Kuomintang. The strike movement spread. In 1931, there were 395 strikes recorded, with 760,000 participants, in 1932—327 strikes with 1,216,000 participants, in 1933 the figures were 359 and 691,500.¹ In 1935 to 1937, about half of all labour disputes developed into strikes. The most important were the anti-Japanese strikes in Shanghai and Qingdao (about 100,000 took part in the November 1936 strikes). Spontaneous economic strikes at Japanese textile factories erupted into the destruction of factory premises and yarn, and fights with the Japanese police and troops. They acquired political overtones and found a broad response in Chinese society. The Chinese national bourgeoisie supported the strikers. Workers also took an active part in the students' famous anti-Japanese "Movement of 9th December" in 1936, which swept Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Canton and other university centres. As Japanese aggression developed, the struggle against Japanese intervention within the newly formed united anti-Japanese national front became the main aspect of the labour movement.

However, the Communist Party was unable to use this mighty anti-imperialist potential of the urban proletariat. This was partly due to the fact that under the impact of the mass repression of 1931-1933 its leading bodies had been forced to shift from the cities to the districts where Soviets had been established, located in the southern and central provinces. This made it difficult for the Communists to work in the towns.

After the Party had rejected the Li Lisan policy, it made a number of attempts to renew its ties with the working class by penetrating the legal trade unions and drawing workers into the Party and the Red trade unions. In June 1933, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, following the TUI decisions on a united labour front, issued a unity of action appeal to rank-and-file members of the legal trade unions. In addition, several attempts were made to negotiate with the legal unions' leaders. None of these measures, however, brought tangible results since the government continued to take repressive

¹ M. Pashkova, "The Labour Movement in China", *Problemy Kitaya*, No. 14, 1935, p. 317 (in Russian).

measures against revolutionary trade union leaders. The leader of the ACFTU Luo Dengxian, the prominent union leader Deng Zhongxian and others were seized and put to death by the Kuomintang. In 1933 and 1934, the majority of the communist district, urban and provincial organisations, including the clandestine centre in Shanghai, were destroyed. Only individual, scattered groups of Communists, with no contact with the centre and among themselves, continued to exist in the towns deep underground.

In subsequent years the economic and political struggle of the working class developed chiefly under the leadership of the legal national-reformist trade unions or else occurred spontaneously.

During the Comintern's 7th Congress, the Chinese delegation, at the suggestion of the Executive Committee, issued on 1 August 1935 an Appeal to the People on Resistance to Japan and the Salvation of the Motherland, calling for the creation of a united anti-Japanese national front, the ending of the civil war, and the establishment of a government of national defence and a united anti-Japanese army. However, the Chinese Communist Party's new policy turn was accompanied by great difficulties.

The Party leadership in which Mao Tse-tung had begun to play a leading role adhered to a policy of overthrowing Chiang Kaishek's government, and this impeded the establishment of a united anti-Japanese front. Not until August 1936, after insistent recommendations from the Comintern, did the Communist Party of China Central Committee turn to the Kuomintang with an appeal to unite their efforts in the struggle against Japanese aggression. At the same time, the CC, in fact, abandoned the struggle for the working-class interests and recognised de facto the Kuomintang's monopoly on leadership of the working class. Over the following 10 years Mao Tse-tung and his supporters virtually ignored the labour movement and based their policy almost exclusively on the peasantry and to some extent on the urban middle strata.

Between 1934 and 1936 the revolutionary bases (Soviet areas) in the central part of the country were eliminated and the remnants of the Communist Party and its armed forces (the Red Army) were driven back to the most remote and sparsely populated north-west areas on the borders of Shenxi, Gansu and Ningxia provinces. The Chiang Kaishek government amassed its strength for a final blow to completely destroy the Communist Party and the Red Army. In fact the Party had lost its mass basis and was obviously isolated not only from the working class but from the peasantry as well. In the towns it had contact only with the revolutionary section of the students and intelligentsia. The defeat of the Communist Party's armies created a severe crisis in its ranks. It was overcome towards the end of 1936 thanks to the persistent efforts of the Comintern.

In September 1937, the civil war in China was brought to an end and a united anti-Japanese front which included the Kuomintang, the Communist Party and other patriotic political and social organisations was set up.

In *Vietnam* in the second half of the 1920s isolated spontaneous actions by workers at individual enterprises began to grow into a national anti-imperialist upsurge. However, these actions lacked organisation and a united programme and there was a severe shortage of mature political leadership.

Marxist-Leninist ideas were initially adopted by a small group of Vietnamese who lived outside the country and among whom Ho Chi Minh played a special role. In 1925, Ho Chi Minh, as the Comintern's representative in the Far East, set up the Alliance of Oppressed Peoples in Asia and then, together with a group of Vietnamese patriots, formed, outside the country, the Association of Revolutionary Youth of Vietnam. This was the first Marxist organisation which started to propagate Marxist-Leninist ideas in Vietnam and to set up its own local organisations.

The establishment of branches of the Association in Hanoi, Haiphong, Nam Dinh, Saigon and in the provinces of Nghean and Ha Tinh in Central Vietnam gave a strong impetus to the organisation of the working class. The first underground trade union established in 1920 in Saigon by Ton Duc Thang, a participant in the French Navy mutiny in the Black Sea in 1919, became a member of the Association.

In September 1928 the North Vietnamese Committee of the Association set itself the task of proletarianising its ranks—bringing advanced workers into its membership. This proletarianisation drive was of enormous significance in mobilising the forces of the working class and educating communist leaders. Thanks to this the merger of Marxism-Leninism with the working-class movement made a big advance. Active members of the Association led the majority of demonstrations in the towns and coal-mining areas of North Vietnam. Red trade unions, active in towns and on the plantations, developed rapidly. The first branches of the future Communist Party of Vietnam arose from the drive for proletarianisation.

Three organisations of Communists existed in Vietnam. On 17 July 1929 the Communist Party of Indo-China was formed in Hanoi, in August 1929 the Communist Party of Annam was set up, and on 1 January 1930 the Indo-Chinese Communist Union was established in Central Vietnam. Lack of unity reduced the effectiveness of communist activity. Following a recommendation by the Comintern, a unity conference was convened in Hong Kong. From 3 to 7 February 1930, at a session chaired by Ho Chi Minh, a resolution was passed on the establishment of a united Communist Party of Vietnam and the

Constitution of the Party, and brief theses on its Programme were endorsed. A provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam was elected.

The beginning of the world economic crisis of 1929-1933 was marked by a powerful upsurge in the revolutionary struggle. In February 1930 the Communist Party led a struggle of 3,000 workers on the rubber plantations in South Vietnam. In March, Communists organised a strike of 4,000 textile workers in Nam Dinh. The popular uprising in Central Vietnam, in the provinces of Nghean and Ha Tinh (the Nghe Tinh uprising) was the culminating point of this upsurge. From 20 February 1930 on, the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party and the mass organisations which it led—the Red Working Class Union, the Red Peasant Union, the Union of Women, the Youth Union and the Anti-Imperialist Union, operated in these provinces. Of the 7 Communist branches in Nghean 3 operated in rural areas. The May Day demonstrations by workers and peasants became the starting point for the rapid growth of this mass struggle. In September 1930 insurgent peasants in Nghean and Ha Tinh dismissed the local administration. Soviets were set up as organs of insurgent popular power in 116 villages. Local organisations of the Communist Party led the peasants' struggle. Party Committees in Nghean and Ha Tinh mobilised worker activists and sent them into the insurgent areas. In September the Central Committee worked out guidelines for Party organisations in the insurgent areas. Demonstrations of solidarity with the fighters of Nghe Tinh began throughout the country.

The Soviets of Nghe Tinh lasted for almost a year. They implemented a series of profound democratic reforms and established a new social order. In 1930 and 1931 340 local party organisations with 3,313 members were established in the insurgent provinces. The membership of trade unions increased sharply. 64,000 people joined the peasants' unions, about 14,000 joined the Red self-defence units, over 12,000 women were in the Women's Union and about 5,000 in the Youth Union.

However, a lack of experience, poor theoretical training of most of Party activists, an insufficient organisation of the driving forces of the revolution, and difficulties of an objective character enabled the colonialists to master the situation. Many insurgent villages were wiped off the face of the earth and tens of thousands of patriots were arrested. About 500 freedom fighters were sentenced to death.¹ In March 1931 the greater part of the members of the Party Central Committee were arrested in Saigon and many Party branches were destroyed. On 5 June 1931, the Hong Kong police arrested Ho Chi Minh. On 5 September 1931, the General Secretary of the Communist

¹ *A Modern History of Vietnam. 1917-1965*, Moscow, 1970, p. 98 (in Russian).

Party Central Committee, Tran Phu, died in a Saigon dungeon.

The international communist and progressive movement launched a broad campaign of assistance for the victims of colonialist terror. The French Communist Party began an active campaign in support of the Vietnamese patriots. International pressure helped to save Ho Chi Minh from death. In 1933, he arrived in the Soviet Union.

In order to avert a new revolutionary upsurge and prevent a wave of discontent the colonial authorities combined repression with attempts at reform. A programme of reforms for Indo-China announced by the French Minister for Colonies Paul Reynaud, promised "a wider franchise", "a fairer system of taxation", reforms in the administration and wage system, assistance to small entrepreneurs and the construction of irrigation systems. However, this policy of manoeuvring had only a temporary effect.

The Vietnamese Communists were determined to continue the struggle. In October 1930 the Communist Party of Vietnam was renamed the Communist Party of Indo-China and in April 1931 the 11th Plenary Session of the Comintern's Executive Committee accepted it as a member of the Comintern. In 1932 the Foreign Bureau of the Party Central Committee drew up a new programme of action which drew on the experience and lessons of the upsurge and defeat of the revolution in 1930-1931 and aimed at re-establishing the Party and consolidating the ranks of the working class. The newspaper *Bolshevik*, the voice of the Foreign Bureau, started publication; the Party Committee of South Vietnam and, later on, other Party organisations throughout the country were restored.

The popular movement, above all of the working class, began to come to life again. It acquired new features which indicated that the social base of the revolution had widened. Protest demonstrations spread to the border areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. The struggle of the urban middle strata grew in strength and their activities found a response and support in the working class.

At the beginning of 1935 a number of political demonstrations were organised, among which one may note Days in Memory of Lenin which were held in the Bien Hoa, Giã Dinh, Cho Lon, Dyh Hoa areas (South Vietnam). In a number of places the Communist Party distributed leaflets and held meetings and demonstrations. In May 1935 in the provinces of Cao bang and Bacninh in North Vietnam and in Nghean in Central Vietnam a movement flared up in which along with economic demands political slogans were put forward, such as "Down with French Imperialism".¹

In March 1935, the 1st Congress of the CPIC was held. It was attended by representatives of Party organisations of Vietnam and

¹ *Xo Viet Nghe-Tinh*, Hanoi, 1962, p. 42.

Laos. Its decisions reflected issues arising at the new stage of the revolution, and dealt with the use of all forms of legal and illegal struggle and the establishment and strengthening of Red trade unions, the Union of Communist Youth, the Red Peasants Union and the Red Social Security Society as bases for a united anti-imperialist front. The Congress documents stressed the need for unity of the Party and consistent implementation of its political line.

In accordance with the requirements of the new international and domestic situation and following the recommendations of the Comintern, the Congress amended those propositions in the Programme of Action which ignored the possibility of cooperation with patriotic elements of the national bourgeoisie and other strata of the population to attain common goals. As a result of a strengthening of the Communist Party's leading bodies and the return from abroad or prison of a number of Party leaders, the Party was able to develop its political and organisational work among the masses.

The decisions of the Comintern's 7th Congress, which emphasised the need for a broad united front to fight fascism and war, were strongly supported in Vietnam.

The formation of a Popular Front government in France also helped in making the change-over to new tactics of struggle in Vietnam. The repressive activities of the colonial administration were to a certain extent restricted. A group of political detainees, members of the Communist Party of Indo-China, were set free, among them Le Duan, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap, Hoang Quoc Viet and others. The victory of working people in France had a notable impact on the positions of those strata of Indo-Chinese society which had so far stood aside from mass struggle, above all the national bourgeoisie.

A plenary session of the CPIC Central Committee was convened to work out a new line in the policy of the Party and the movement of the class forces which it led. The session adopted new guidelines, in particular, on a united national front. It was decided to drop for the time being the slogans "Down with French Imperialism" and "Confiscate Landowners' Land and Give It to the Peasants" and to establish a broad national united democratic anti-imperialist front which would rally all parties, various political groupings, religious organisations and all the peoples of Indo-China in a joint struggle for basic democratic rights: freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, the right to organise marches, freedom to emigrate, a general amnesty for all political detainees, an 8-hour working day, the introduction of labour legislation, etc.

On the basis of these guidelines the Communist Party addressed an open letter to political parties urging the setting up of a National Anti-Imperialist Front whose programme was proposed to compri-

se the 12 points for joint struggle put forward by the Communist Party. On the basis of a broad mass campaign and steering for an alliance between workers and peasants, the Communist Party launched a powerful movement for democratic rights and freedoms and the consolidation of all revolutionary forces.

In the latter half of 1936, the Party headed a movement for the convening of an Indo-Chinese Congress which was to present the demands of the popular masses of Indo-China to a Committee of the French Parliament. Local action committees affiliated to the Preparatory Committee for the Indo-Chinese Congress were set up. The movement spread through town and country, uniting the working class and peasantry. This mass political work was reinforced by the training of leading activists, the mobilisation of young people and women and their involvement in education, which all helped to strengthen the Party's influence amongst people.

The authorities prohibited the movement for an Indo-Chinese Congress. But the mass struggle continued. More and more demonstrations were held demanding better living conditions, democratic freedoms and lower taxes.

In the course of mobilising the popular masses the Communist Party fought Trotskyite organisations which had become active. The period of temporary cooperation between Communists and Trotskyites (the electoral bloc) showed that this cooperation harmed the Party, that it spread harmful views among its members and followers. In July 1937, the Party Central Committee took a decision to end the bloc with the Trotskyites. This fundamental decision served to widen the scope for activity to establish the Democratic Front of Indo-China. Party organisations and mass associations which worked under the leadership of Communists grew stronger. By March 1938 Party membership had doubled compared with the previous years. Despite a counter-attack by reaction, the strike movement in the towns was on the uprise.¹ On 1 May 1938, in honour of the International Day of Solidarity of the Working People, the Communist Party and the Democratic Front organised in Hanoi a protest meeting against Japanese aggression in China attended by 50,000 people.

The Party worked hard in the rural areas among the peasantry in setting up and strengthening mass organisations of the Democratic Front. By the middle of 1938 in Central Vietnam alone there were about 160,000 peasants organised in self-help societies.

Thanks to its correct tactical slogans the Communist Party managed to increase its membership and strengthen its organisations. It forged the working class and peasantry into an alliance under the leadership of the proletariat and equipped the masses with an under-

¹ *Kommunistichesky Internatsional*, No. 12, 1938, p. 114.

standing of the full complexity of the current situation and the need to be ready for new trials and for struggle within the ranks of the international progressive movement.

The working class of *India* formed an integral part of the national liberation movement led by the national bourgeoisie. The Indian National Congress which throughout the 1920s and 1930s was led by M.K. Gandhi had as its aim the gradual advance to political independence. In order to achieve this aim it sought to unite classes and strata of Indian society under the leadership of national bourgeois forces. The Congress leaders were, therefore, in favour of settling all social and class conflicts on the basis of class peace. In their efforts to draw not only the upper strata of Indian society but also peasants, workers and the lower urban strata into the national liberation struggle, the national bourgeoisie tried at the same time to conduct this struggle through non-violent action.

However, the national bourgeoisie failed to instill ideas of class peace. Strikes continued throughout the country and, in fact, from the second half of the 1920s economic strikes were increasingly backed up by solidarity strikes, meetings and political demonstrations.

The late 1920s saw the emergence of revolutionary trade unions out to fight for full national independence and to defend consistently the workers' class interests. The dedicated work of left forces and above all Communists helped to bring this about.

The establishment of strong revolutionary trade unions in colonial India encountered considerable difficulties. A total lack of political rights for working people, a high turnover of trade union membership, all but total illiteracy and the prevalence of religious and caste forms of relationships and views acted as a brake on consolidation of the ranks and the growth of class consciousness of the proletariat.

The upsurge of the working-class movement in India hastened the organisation of communist groups and the establishment of contact between them and the Comintern. In December 1925, a conference of Communists was held in Kanpur where the formation of the Communist Party of India was announced. The Communist International gave Indian Communists a great deal of help in organising their Party and in working out a political line.

Between 1926 and 1928 worker-peasant parties were set up in Bengal, Bombay, the United Provinces and the Punjab on the initiative of Communists. The leadership of these organisations comprised both Communists and revolutionary democrats. While not opposing the INC, these parties, at the same time, tried to unite the national liberation movement with the struggle in defence of the interests of the working people. They became extremely important channels for communist influence over the working class, the peasantry and the urban middle strata. A number of trade unions operated under their lead-

ership, and so did the peasant unions (Kisan Sabhas) which arose at the beginning of the 1930s and helped involve peasant masses into the national liberation movement.

In 1928, the Indian Socialist Republican Association was set up headed by the well-known Indian revolutionary Bhagat Singh; Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, later Communist Party leader, took an active part in setting up this organisation. The All-India League of Independence headed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, the All-India League of Youth, the New Youth Union, etc., also came into being at that time.

The year 1930 was notable for the campaign of civil disobedience remarkable for its mass participation and the variety of forms of struggle—*hartals*, strikes, protest meetings, demonstrations, the defiance of various restrictions imposed by the colonial authorities, newspaper stoppages, and resignations from colonial administration. The struggle reached such an intensity that for the first time in the history of the national liberation movement there were occasions when the army and the police refused to fire on demonstrators. The national liberation movement enveloped the bulk of the working class; besides workers employed in modern industry and transport, manufacturers' and plantation workers also joined in. In a number of cases the workers became the main driving force of anti-colonial demonstrations. This indicated a strengthening of the link between the working class and the national liberation movement.

In these years of vigorous action against the colonial authorities the masses gained experience of united struggle, the workers became better organised and socialist ideas became widespread among them, the Communist Party grew stronger and left-wing trends consolidated.

The civil disobedience campaign provoked widespread repression against the leaders of the labour and national liberation movement. In 1933 about 120,000 participants in the movement were in prisons. In 1934 the Communist Party was declared illegal; this decree remained in force for almost ten years. The provisional Central Committee elected in November 1933 led the Party's underground work right up until its 1st Congress in 1943.

Since it proved impossible to suppress the national liberation movement simply through repression, the British authorities tried to divide the movement. In 1935, a Government of India Act was passed which gave certain privileges to local princes and landowners and at the same time stirred up national, religious, social and similar conflicts.

The passing of this Act triggered off a new upsurge in the national liberation movement.

During this upsurge the left wing significantly increased its influ-

ence in the Indian National Congress. Although the left forces were still extremely heterogeneous and contacts between them were weak their increased strength helped to spread socialist ideas in the mass movement, above all among the workers and partly the peasants. Slogans calling for the social re-structuring of society were voiced amidst the national liberation movement. The masses began to link the achievement of national liberation from colonial dependency with the implementation of various socio-economic reforms and an improvement in the condition of working people. Mass organisations of the working class, students, young people, etc., also began to grow.

As a result of the upsurge in the anti-colonial movement the position of the left forces was strengthened, the struggle to unite all fighters against imperialism was broadened, and the level of organisation of working people was enhanced.

The end of the 1930s was marked by powerful actions undertaken by the proletariat. There were about 400 strikes involving about half a million workers every year, with 9 million man-days lost.¹ The strike by Kanpur textile workers, which lasted intermittently from 1937 to 1938 and which ended in victory for the workers, was a notable event in the history of the working-class movement of India. Solidarity strikes to support the textile workers were declared in other industries and on the railways, accompanied by meetings and demonstrations. The authorities had to satisfy the strikers' demands and to recognise the union.

The upsurge in the labour movement brought about a considerable improvement in the organisation of workers: between 1936 and 1939 the number of registered trade unions grew from 271 to 562 and their membership from 261,000 to 400,000.² In April 1938, the All-India Trade Union Congress and the National Trade Union Federation merged.³

The involvement of the masses in the national liberation movement, its increased level of organisation and the link between slogans of national liberation and socio-economic reform gave rise to a growing polarisation of forces in the Indian National Congress. Reactionary and communalist forces became much more active. At a session of the Congress in 1939 they managed to remove the left from its leading body, the Working Committee. A campaign was also launched to squeeze the left out of the leadership of mass organisations. However, despite the efforts of the right wing and the manoeuvres of the British authorities, mass anti-colonialist demonstrations continued.

¹ V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions. A Survey*, Bombay, 1960, p. 89.

² Ibid.

³ S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, Bombay, 1948, pp. 333-34.

From its very inception the working class of *Indonesia* took an active part in the national liberation struggle. On 1 May 1924 the Communist Party of Indonesia held meetings and demonstrations attended by thousands of people on Java and in a number of areas in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Revolutionary propaganda was conducted among the peasant masses through the Communist-led association Sarekat Rakjat. The increase in activity by the Party provoked a wave of repression against Communists, forcing them into semi-legality.

The strategy and tactics of the Communist Party were reflected in its Rules and Programme which were adopted at its joint congress with Sarekat Rakjat in June 1924.¹ These documents which contained major national and democratic demands, the Congress call to "Organise", and the translation of certain important Marxist-Leninist works into Indonesian, all helped to increase the Party's organisational and propaganda work amongst the masses. A great deal of work was undertaken through the people's schools organised by Sarekat Rakjat, which taught not only reading and writing but also some political knowledge. Thousands of people attended meetings organised by the Communist Party and Sarekat Rakjat.

However, the severe repression which impeded the formation of politically experienced Party cadres created serious difficulties for the Communist Party. Thus in 1924 a left sectarian approach prevailed in the Party leadership which assumed that the coming anti-colonial revolution in Indonesia would be carried out by the proletariat alone and would be socialist in character. This assessment prompted the Communist Party to adopt a decision to prepare for an armed uprising at its conference held in Kutageda at the end of 1924. A decision was also taken to reorganise the Party on an underground basis and to transform, in fact, to abolish Sarekat Rakjat. Its proletarian elements were to be incorporated in the Communist Party while peasant elements were to be organised in cooperative (i.e., purely economic) associations. The Party's most important task was to organise the proletariat.

From the beginning of 1925 the Communist Party, its new chairman Sardjono, launched an active campaign to set up industrial trade unions. By the spring of 1925 there were 112 trade unions with a membership of 58,000. Grouped together in the Secretariat of Red Indonesian Labour Unions they affiliated to the Trade Union International (maintaining their ties with the Indonesian trade union centre).

¹ For details on the work of the Congress see: R. T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, New York, 1965, pp. 195-96; A. K. Pringgodigdo, *Sedjarah pergerakan rakjat Indonesia*, Djakarta, 1960, pp. 43-44.

In the summer of 1925 a new major strike wave, a second after the First World War, swept the country, accompanied by the development of a mass trade union movement. The number of union members reached the unprecedented figure of 300,000. Even contract coolies set up their own organisations. Most of the unions were led by the Communist Party.

During this period the influence of the Communist Party reached its zenith. Its revolutionary propaganda penetrated into remote areas. It published 38 magazines and newspapers, more than all the nationalist organisations. Many trade unions also had their own papers. Party membership rose to between 8 and 9 thousand, while Sarekat Rakjat which had extended its activities despite the decision taken by the Communist Party had 100,000 members. The Party's influence was widespread in petty-bourgeois nationalist organisations. There were Party branches in ethnic organisations, in some army units and even in the police service. However, the masses who had poured into the Party frequently regarded it not as a class party but as the most radical organisation fighting for independence.

In effect the Communist Party became a broad anti-colonial organisation. The contradiction between content and form also gave rise to ideological contradictions. At a time when the influence of the Party was increasing, the Party leadership accelerated the pace towards an uprising.

The orientation on an uprising was still maintained when, in May 1926, the majority of the Party's publications were closed down, sections of the Party and of Sarekat Rakjat were dissolved and new arrests among the leadership took place. In this situation armed uprisings took place in November 1926 in Java and in January 1927 in Sumatra which were actually the culmination of a spontaneous, essentially anti-colonial and anti-feudal struggle by the peasantry. These actions, which became known as the first national uprising in Indonesia, struck a tangible blow at the prestige of the colonial authorities and left their mark on the consciousness of the Indonesian people. However, because they were premature they were quickly suppressed. Savage reprisals against the participants quickly followed.¹ The working-class and national liberation movement suffered an extremely heavy blow.

Even so, the liberation movement in Indonesia in subsequent years was strongly influenced by Communists. A few months after the defeat of the uprising popular unrest began again, in many respects still an echo of recent events (for example, demonstrations by peasants waving red flags). Strikes broke out and some trade unions (mainly

¹ See *Pemberontakan nasional pertama di Indonesia (1926)*. Disusun oleh Lembaga Sedjarah PKI, Djakarta, 1961.

among office workers) were re-established. Nationalist parties in Indonesia renewed their activities, seeking broader mass support.

In 1927, Sukarno founded the Nationalist Party of Indonesia which followed a policy reflecting the views of the most radical section of the national bourgeoisie. Communists, who were working deep underground, concentrated their activities in the NPI. In 1928, in cooperation with left nationalists, Communists established the Union of the Working Class of Indonesia (SKBI) which quickly increased its influence in the country. However, in the summer of 1929 the Union was smashed and the leadership of the NPI was arrested. The influence of right-wing reformist organisations grew stronger in the labour movement. In 1930 trade unions led by these organisations formed themselves into trade union associations which joined the Amsterdam International in 1931. The upsurge in strike action that had started in 1928-1929 was replaced by a decline.

At the beginning of the 1930s when the full effect of the world economic crisis hit Indonesia, the people's struggle was renewed. In April 1931, the Nationalist Party of Indonesia was re-established under the name of the Party of Indonesia (Partindo). Communists took part in its organisation. In calling for the immediate declaration of independence and putting forward the principle of non-cooperation with the colonial authorities, Partindo paid greater attention to the labour problem than its predecessor had done. It managed to set up a number of labour organisations; it also tried to establish a trade union centre. In 1932 and 1933 the number of strikes was the greatest for the period between the world wars.¹ In these conditions Communists made serious attempts to re-establish the Party. In 1932 a new programme of the Communist Party of Indonesia was drawn up.

The armed mutiny by Dutch and Indonesian seamen on board the destroyer *De Zeven Provinciën* in 1933 was a major event. Its suppression brought in its train reprisals not only against its participants but against leaders of the left nationalist movement. The leadership of Partindo was also arrested.

The social movement again became active in the mid-1930s and there was a growing move to consolidate national organisations. In 1935 a new united Party of Great Indonesia (Parindra) was established and became the main base for the legal activity of Indonesian Communists who set up chapters in national organisations. Pursuing the line adopted by the 7th Congress of the Comintern on setting up popular fronts, the Communists took an active part in establishing a new left party, the Movement of the Indonesian People (Gerindo) in 1937, which declared its readiness to establish cooperation on an

¹ Sandra, *Sedjarah pergerakan buruh Indonesia*, Djakarta, 1961, p. 46.

anti-fascist basis with the Dutch authorities on condition of a democratisation of political life in Indonesia.

By the end of the 1930s, communist groups had grown and gained strength; they organised political education courses and began to publish leaflets from the Central Committee. In 1938 the Party began publication of *Menara Merah* ("Red Tower"). In 1939, the efforts by Parindra and Gerindo resulted in a bloc of the most important national organisations, the Political Association of Indonesia (ICCL), which basically adopted the platform of Gerindo. Its permanent body, the All-Indonesia People's Congress, represented 90 parties and public organisations. Communists were among its leadership, together with bourgeois leaders. In December 1939 it organised political meetings throughout the country in support of its demands; workers took an active part in them.

In the main *Arab countries* the national liberation movement which involved broad strata of working people developed under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, landowners, tribal chiefs, the Muslim clergy and bourgeois intelligentsia.

The 1920s were a period when the young working class of Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria took the first steps to gather their forces and set up their own organisations which embraced only a very small vanguard. In the majority of other Arab countries the national working class was only just being born. However, even in those years Arab workers took an active part in the anti-colonial struggle, usually under the influence and leadership of patriotic parties or Muslim religious organisations.

In *Egypt* simultaneously with the development of the working-class movement a Communist Party was established. It worked in the trade unions and in enterprises and was active in strikes. In 1924 it had 1,500 members.¹ The Party had some influence in the towns but practically no links with the peasantry.

In April 1923, a Constitution was introduced in Egypt which provided for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, and in January 1924 the first parliamentary election took place in the country. The overwhelming majority of votes went to the bourgeois landowner party, the Wafd, which in this period headed the national liberation movement in the country. This party formed the first government.

The installation of the Wafd government coincided with an upsurge in the working-class movement. At the end of February 1924 workers in Alexandria seized a number of factories and refused to leave them until their demands were fully met. The European capitalists who owned these factories, frightened by the scale of the movement, made some partial concessions to the workers and increased wages.

¹ Elinor Burns, *British Imperialism in Egypt*, London, 1928, p. 54.

This first victory gave encouragement to the workers. A campaign to seize factories was launched throughout the country. Management passed into the hands of strike committees. The strikers demanded an 8-hour working day and wage increases, and at a number of factories political slogans were put forward and solidarity strikes staged. Objectively these actions by the workers were also directed against the interests of the local bourgeoisie. For this reason the Wafd government fought the strikers, resorting to the help of the army and the police. In May 1924 the government disbanded the Egyptian Confederation of Labour and put its leaders on trial. Instead of revolutionary trade unions closely linked to the Trade Union International the Wafd party set up the General Association of Egyptian Workers. In May 1924 a large number of Communist Party leaders were arrested. Of the 11 members of its Central Committee only 2 managed to escape abroad. In October 1924 those who had been arrested received prison sentences.

Despite its lack of consistency the policies of the Wafd government affected the interests of British imperialism. Using the murder of the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army, the British Major-General Lee Stack, as a pretext Britain therefore managed to secure the resignation of the Wafd government in November 1924. The new government which drew its support from landowning and comprador circles and collaborated closely with the British stepped up the campaign of mass repression against the communist and labour movement. In July 1925 the Communist Party was prohibited and all its leaders and active members were arrested. The Party's General Secretary Antun Marun died in prison. In the same year the Communist Party ceased to exist as an organised force. In future only individual groups of Communists continued to function, having little contact with each other. The trade union association set up by the Wafdist was also subject to repression: it was disbanded and strikes were forbidden.

A new upsurge of the mass movement occurred in 1930. It developed in the summer throughout the country under the slogans of the defence of democracy, parliamentarism and the Constitution. In a number of towns the demonstrations developed into armed uprisings. With the help of the British army they were put down by the monarchist government.

After the movement had been defeated, the 1923 Constitution was abolished, the franchise was restricted, and the power of the executive was extended. But attempts to introduce a new constitution and to conduct parliamentary elections on its basis provoked a new outburst of mass discontent. Major clashes took place on 14 to 16 May 1931 in Bulak, a working-class suburb of Cairo. The main driving force in this uprising was the workers, who built barricades and

fought with the police and the army. In the course of the clashes, 40 fighters were killed and over a thousand wounded.

The anti-imperialist struggle did not die down. In the summer of 1934, mass strikes of workers demanding recognition of the trade unions and an increase in wages to follow the rise in food prices began in Cairo and other towns. In a number of places they developed into direct confrontations with the police. The upsurge in the working-class movement activated the Wafd party which demanded a return to the 1923 Constitution.

In November 1935 mass revolutionary demonstrations flared up again. On 13 November, in Cairo, a demonstration was held in which 40,000 people took part, while on 14 November an actual battle with the troops broke out. Towards the end of November life in the capital was completely paralysed. Workers, students and craftsmen attacked the police and troops and built barricades. The scale of the struggle forced Britain to make concessions. The 1923 Constitution was restored and Britain agreed to conclude a new treaty.

This treaty, signed in August 1936, abolished the system of capitulation, provided for an end to the occupation of the main area of the country (Britain could retain a limited number of troops in the Suez Canal Zone), abolished the privileged position of British officers and civil servants in the army and the civil administration, etc. However, independence was by no means full. Many provisions in the treaty were fulfilled only after the end of the Second World War.

In March 1938 the Federation of Trade Unions of Egypt was set up which launched a mass strike movement for the legalisation of trade unions. At the beginning of the Second World War strikes were forbidden and the Federation ceased to exist.

In *Algeria* a significant increase in the number of employees was observed in the inter-war period. In 1924 there were 110,000 local workers in the country.¹ The majority of them were employed in transport, in the docks, in construction and in trade.

The trade union and socialist movement in Algeria had a long tradition rooted back in the 19th century. However, the national diversity of the Algerian proletariat and the paternalist and assimilationist position held by French Socialists impeded the development of a mass movement by the Algerian working people. Communist organisations sought to amend this situation. In 1924 they united in a special Algerian Federation, affiliated to the French Communist Party, which in 1936 was transformed into the Algerian Communist Party. Communists made a maximum effort to draw Algerian workers into organised class struggle and to overcome the tradition of underestimation of work among the native population, inherited from the So-

¹ C. R. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, Paris, 1969, p. 83.

cialist Party. The Communist cadre were continually subjected to repression, pressure, and police surveillance.

Despite this the Communists and the progressive trade unions they had set up achieved a fair amount. Thanks to their efforts, of the 23 strikes which took place in 1924 10 ended in victory for the workers (a rise in wages or the introduction of the 8-hour working day).¹ In 1925 the Algerian Federation had 1,500 members, chiefly Europeans. Algerians joined the French Communist Party chiefly while in emigration in France. The future member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party Abd El-Kadir Hadj Ali, Mahmud Ben Lakhal, the trade union leader Maaruf Muhammed, etc., emerged from their ranks during the 1920s. In 1926 Hadj Ali organised the association called the North African Star affiliated to the French Communist Party, which subsequently became the embryo of the revolutionary-democratic trend and the most influential organisation of Algerian patriots. Up until 1936 joint actions by the Communists and by the North African Star which, not infrequently, broke out into clashes between thousands of demonstrators and the police, brought fear to the colonialists in Algeria.

From the end of the 1920s, village farm workers, and the poorest and landless peasants began to join in the strike movement of urban workers and to demonstrate against police repression and the expropriation of their land by European colonisers. In a number of instances they offered armed resistance.

Representatives of the national bourgeoisie, Muslim intelligentsia and petty-bourgeois strata in the towns and villages also took part in the mass movement of social and national protest. The ideas of scientific socialism and the work of the Communist Party influenced the evolution of revolutionary-democratic nationalism in Algeria despite divergent views and fierce controversies between the two.

From 1932, a wave of unrest swept the Algerian regions of Blida and Tlemcen, the Aurès and Ouarsenis Mountains and the El Oued oasis. Farm hands and poor peasants protested against the expropriation of land, taxation and denial of access to forests and state-owned land; they demanded an end to the rule of the *kaid*s (local officials) and the French administrators. Between 1934 and 1936 this movement, led by Communists, developed into "Marches on the Towns" where rural workers took part in joint demonstrations, meetings and other mass actions together with urban workers, both Algerian and European. All sections of the proletariat—dockers, building workers, bakers, etc.—participated in this mass movement, often in unity with peasants and with conscripts who did not wish to serve in the

¹ *Red International of Trade Unions*, No. 5(64), 1926, p. 712 (in Russian).

colonial army. In 1935 Algerian soldiers in the French garrison in Sétif took up arms against the authorities.

Increased activity by fascists prompted a new upsurge in the mass movement in Algeria. Fascist terrorists from the Doriot party began to provoke acts of violence. In July 1935, their armed units held a parade in Algiers. As a mark of protest a 15,000-strong demonstration was held in the suburbs of Algiers.

Between 1935 and 1937, the Algerian Communist Party directed its main effort into the fight against the threat of fascism and in support of the Popular Front in France. In 1936 it sponsored 150 protest meetings in which about 50,000 people took part; in many of the marches which it organised, up to half the participants were Algerians. In 1935 it had 5,000 members, and in 1937 it was successful in cantonal and municipal elections. It won the admiration of many nationalists for its joint work with national and religious organisations within the Muslim Congress. Communists are the yeast of the people, sheikh Ben Badis, president of the Association of Algerian Ulems, said in 1937.

The Party took an active part in the international struggle against fascism, sending up to 2,000 Algerian Communists to the International Brigades in Spain in 1936-1938. However, the majority of the Party's supporters were European workers. Algerian workers in the main supported the successor to the North African Star—the Algerian People's Party. At the beginning of the Second World War, this Party and the Communist Party were banned by the colonial authorities.

In *Tunisia*, the first working-class and communist organisations functioned initially as affiliates (federations) of French organisations. By 1924 the Federation of Communists was banned and continued to work underground. 56 trade unions belonged to the departmental association of the General Confederation of Labour.

In the summer of 1924, there was an upsurge in the working-class movement which was accompanied by mass strikes and the establishment of national trade unions of Muslim workers. At the end of the year these trade unions merged into the Tunisian General Confederation of Labour, whose leadership included Communists. The Confederation quickly became subject to repression, its organisers were arrested and at the end of 1925 expelled from Tunisia. In conditions of persecution and factional struggle the Tunisian Communist Federation in fact collapsed.

The anti-imperialist struggle gained new strength at the beginning of the 1930s owing to the activity of a group of nationalists led by Habib Bourgiba. This group drew support from the intelligentsia and the national bourgeoisie and also enjoyed the support of some of the peasantry and the working class. Bourgiba advocated social re-

form and the abolition of feudal vestiges and backwardness, and opposed colonial oppression. In 1934 his group left the nationalist party Destour and formed a new party, the Neo-Destour. This party became the leading patriotic force in Tunisia and had a dominant influence on Tunisian workers.

After the Popular Front government had been set up in France a number of measures were undertaken in Tunisia which modified the colonial regime: political detainees were freed and restrictions on the press, meetings, etc., were removed. The Communists were legalised and a united General Confederation of Labour was re-established with both European and Tunisian members.

With the fall of the Popular Front government in France the Neo-Destour party went into opposition to the French government and put forward the demand for a Tunisian parliament and government. A mass demonstration was held in Tunis in April 1938 in support of these demands. The colonial authorities sent in troops against the demonstrators, banned Neo-Destour and arrested over 2,000 Party activists. By the beginning of the Second World War French imperialism had managed to suppress the national liberation movement in Tunisia for the time being.

In *Syria* and *Lebanon* the young working class took an active part in the national liberation struggle against the French colonial regime. The first communist groups were set up in Lebanon in 1922 while in October 1924 the Communist Party of Syria with members in both Lebanon and Syria was founded. At the beginning it was called the Lebanese People's Party. On 15 May 1925 the Party newspaper, *L'Humanité*, began to appear (5 issues were printed). In July 1925 the Party was banned and went underground.

In December 1925, the 1st Party conference was held which elected its Central Committee. Fuad Shimali, tobacco factory worker who had previously worked in the Egyptian Communist Party, was elected General Secretary, other leading members were Butrous Khukhaimi, Farid Tuma, Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbak. However, in 1926 and 1927 the leading nucleus of Party workers were arrested and all activity was temporarily halted.

In 1925 the first trade union in Syria was organised among textile industry workers. In the following years trade unions began to emerge in other sectors of the economy.

Due to the low level of socio-economic development in Syria and Lebanon social strata such as craftsmen, petty traders and peasants were the predominant driving forces of the national liberation movement while its leadership was in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, tribal leaders and the Muslim clergy. The National Party founded in 1925 by Abd-el-Rahman Shahbandar was one of the principal national organisations leading the movement.

In July 1925, an anti-French uprising began in the Syrian district of Jebel Druz which quickly spread throughout the country. In October of that year the insurgents surrounded Damascus but under the pressure of superior French forces were obliged to retreat. A guerilla war continued until 1927.

Alarmed by the uprising of 1925-1927 the colonial authorities had recourse to political manoeuvrings. In 1926 Lebanon was declared a republic. Similar manoeuvres were undertaken in Syria where French imperialism tried to set up a puppet republic. Since the Syrian political parties refused to include a clause in the constitution about a French mandate, parliamentary rule was repeatedly replaced by direct colonial administration.

The 1st Congress of the Syrian Communist Party took place in 1930. Khalid Bagdash who, under the pseudonym of Ramzi had taken part in the work of the 7th Congress of the Comintern, was elected as Secretary of the Central Committee.

In January 1936, workers in Damascus began a strike which quickly spread to other towns. This strike lasted for 42 days. Open clashes took place with the colonialists in the provinces. The French threw in tanks and aircraft against the insurgents but were not able to control the situation. A new general uprising was beginning to develop in the country.

In view of the intensity of the liberation struggle, France had to enter into negotiations with Syria and Lebanon. The installation of the Popular Front government in France also helped to this end. In 1936 Franco-Syrian and Franco-Lebanese treaties were signed under which France gave up its mandate to these countries and recognised them as sovereign republics. The treaties were to enter into force 3 years after their ratification.

The elections held in Syria after the signing of the treaty gave victory to the nationalist bloc which formed a government. A more democratic situation was established in the country which enabled the Communist Party to emerge from underground although it was not officially legalised. In 1936 the Party began to publish the newspaper *Saut Al-Shaab*. The plenary meeting of its Central Committee held in 1937 elected Khalid Bagdash as its General Secretary. In 1938 the General Federation of Labour Unions was set up in Syria with the active support of Communists.

However, the period of liberalisation proved to be brief. In 1939, the right-wing government which had succeeded the Popular Front in France refused to recognise the 1936 treaties. In July 1939, the colonial administration dismissed the Syrian parliament and suspended the Constitution. Mass repression followed. Syria and Lebanon entered the Second World War in conditions of the terror organised by the colonialists.

The national liberation movement in *Iraq* developed in conditions of social and economic backwardness, political domination by large landowners and tribal leaders, and the continuing existence of numerous vestiges of feudalism. In 1932 Iraq was recognised as a sovereign state. However its treaty of "alliance" with Britain gave the latter the right to have air force bases on Iraqi soil and various military, political and economic privileges.

In 1931 the Al-Ahali (People) Society was established which numbered among its members representatives of the intelligentsia, students, and officers. Future leaders of the Communist Party also took part in its organisation. The Society advocated political independence for Iraq, demanded that the interests of the national and petty bourgeoisie be defended, and called for an improvement in the situation of working people and the legalisation of trade unions. At the beginning of 1935, Kamil al-Chadarchi, an important figure in bourgeois-democratic circles, joined Al-Ahali.

The first Marxist circle emerged in Iraq in 1927. On 31 March 1934, a conference of representatives from communist groups met in Baghdad and decided to set up a united party and to elect a Committee for Struggle against Imperialism and Exploitation. In 1935 the party became known as the Iraqi Communist Party. Yusuf Suleiman Yusuf, known in the party by the name of Fahid, became its General Secretary. In July 1935, the first number of the Party newspaper *Kifah al-Shaab* (The People's Struggle) appeared. In March 1935, a tribal uprising flared up in the districts of Diwaniyah, Abu Saghirah and Samawa. In May 1935, the population of Rumaythah and Suk al-Shuyukh also rose. Altogether in 1935 and 1936, 6 major popular uprisings took place. They became a school of revolutionary struggle for the Iraqi people. In 1935 the Anti-Imperialist Front was set up with the participation of Communists. It demanded the abolition of the remaining vestiges of the colonial regime and distribution of state-owned land among the peasants. Discontent also swept the army. A broad bloc took shape comprising Al-Ahali, a group of politicians led by Hikmet Suleiman, which was opposed to Britain, and officers led by General Bakr Sidki. On 29 October 1936, Bakr Sidki carried out a coup d'état. The new government was headed by Hikmet Suleiman and included representatives of Al-Ahali, Chadarchi among them. Bakr Sidki became the Chief of General Staff. On 30 October a 50,000-strong demonstration was held in Baghdad in support of the new government in which the popular masses placed great hopes.

In December the government published a programme which contained promises to allocate land to the tribes, to improve the situation of workers, etc. However, there was a lack of unity within the government. Whereas Al-Ahali through the Popular Reform Society (to which Communists belonged) put forward democratic demands, in

particular the introduction of labour legislation and the 8-hour working day, Bakr Sidki sought to establish a personal dictatorship. At his insistence reprisals were taken against tribes in the province of Diwaniyah in May 1937. This led to a split in the government. Chardarchi and other ministers from Al-Ahali resigned. The Popular Reform Society was accused of spreading communist propaganda and dissolved.

Discontent with General Sidki's rule began to grow among the military. On 11 August 1937, Sidki was killed and the garrison commander at Mosul then led an uprising against the government of Suleiman. Troops stationed near Baghdad refused to support the government and on 17 August 1937 Suleiman resigned.

A pro-British group of the military, civil servants and landowners took advantage of the failure of the movement of 1936 and 1937 and came to power before the start of the Second World War.

The working-class movement in *South Africa* developed in complex conditions. The reactionary National Party which came to power in 1924 began to carry out a colour bar policy in industry in order to ensure a monopoly of skilled jobs for white workers, infect them with racialism and win their support. Thus was laid the foundation of a policy which a quarter of a century later was called a policy of apartheid excluding any possibility of racial integration and strengthening the dominant position of the white minority.

This new policy of the ruling circles had a very harmful effect on the white working-class movement. In this connection the programme of the South African Communists entitled *The Road to South African Freedom* said: "Led by Right-wing renegades from socialism, and bribed by concessions and privileges extended to them by monopolists, the great majority of the White workers repudiated the principles of socialism and working class unity... The years since 1922¹ have seen a steady decline in the militancy and class-consciousness of the White workers."²

In view of these new trends, the 3rd Congress of the South African Communist Party (1924) took a decision to concentrate its main efforts on organising the African proletariat which was taking an ever more active part in the class struggle. Communists took part in the work of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICWU) which was the national trade union organisation with about a quarter of a million Africans in it. After the collapse of the ICWU in the late 1920s Communists took the initiative in setting up trade unions which adopted positions of class struggle.

The situation in South Africa was the subject of a special debate at

¹ In 1922 there was an armed uprising of miners.

² *The African Communist*, Moscow, 1970, p. 140.

the 6th Congress of the Comintern. In an Executive Committee resolution the South African Communist Party was set the task of basing its work chiefly on African workers. The resolution also pointed out that in the field of trade union work the Party's main task was to organise African workers.¹ These decisions helped the Communist Party to reorganise its work in keeping with the new conditions of the class struggle.

In 1928, 5 trade unions which had about 10,000 African workers as members merged in the South African Federation of Non-European Trade Unions under the leadership of the Communists Moses Kotane and T. Tibeidi. In 1929 this Federation joined the Trade Union International. During this period a significant number of African workers and revolutionary intellectuals joined the Communist Party. Many of them played an outstanding role in the history of the liberation, trade union and communist movement. They included Albert Nzula, the first African General Secretary of the Communist Party, Moses Kotane and J. B. Marks. In 1929 the Communist Party had 3,000 members.

Between 1933 and 1939, the number of African workers doubled and reached 800,000. The African proletariat firmly occupied the main place in the class struggle. On 1 May 1931, the Communist Party organised a joint demonstration of black and white workers which marched along the streets of Johannesburg demanding work and bread.

Despite numerous obstacles due to repression carried out by the authorities, organisation of workers continued. In the industrial areas of Cape Town and Durban major trade unions were set up, in particular the garment workers' and transport workers' unions in which Communists played a notable role. They were organised on a non-racial basis and united all workers, both black and white.

The desire for unity and joint action in the political struggle grew stronger amongst the working class in South Africa. The organised labour movement repulsed attempts by local fascists to penetrate the trade unions and subvert them to their own influence. In 1935, when fascist Italy attacked Ethiopia, dockers in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth refused to load weapons and military supplies onto Italian ships.

In 1937 in Cape Town Communists, together with other anti-fascists, began to publish a weekly newspaper *The Guardian* which played an important role in the labour and democratic movement in South Africa. The Communist Party urged the working class and democratic quarters to be on the alert and to consolidate their forces in face of the threat of the growing danger from fascism.

¹ A. Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years. The Communist Party of South Africa, 1921-1971*, Inkululeko Publications, Ind., 1980, pp. 113, 116.

The Communist Party functioned legally but very few of its leaders and active members managed to escape prison sentences; meetings organised by the Party were subject to attacks by armed police and white racist hooligans.

The difficulties facing the communist and working-class movement in South Africa were made worse by ultra-left sectarian elements gaining the upper hand in the Party in the 1930s. In 1939, after a new Politbureau headed by General Secretary Moses Kotane had been elected, the Party began to re-establish its forces and to strengthen its links with the masses. Drawing on the decisions of the 7th Congress of the Comintern the new leadership launched a determined fight against sectarianism inside the Party and pursued a united front policy.

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The development of capitalism in Asia and Africa during the inter-war period gave rise to a noticeable increase in the number of wage workers. However, in contrast to the period which preceded the general crisis of capitalism, the increase in the number of the proletariat was connected not so much with agriculture, plantations or transport, as with the mining and manufacturing industries. The expansion of employment in industry was accompanied by an increasing concentration of the proletariat in relatively large factories and a certain growth in skills.

The changing structure of the working class on the one hand and the impact of the upsurge in the national liberation struggle and the international working-class movement on the other helped to raise the level of organisation of the proletariat in the colonial and dependent countries. The trade union movement took on a genuinely mass character during this period. Trade unions were set up in practically all capitalist-organised sectors of the economy. Despite resistance from the employers and repressive measures undertaken by the colonial authorities, national trade union centres were established in a number of countries. The proletariat's international links developed. Union centres in a number of African and Asian countries joined the Trade Union International. The high level of organisation of the trade union movement created real opportunities for carrying out national campaigns with uniform demands of an economic and political nature.

The very logic of the struggle against imperialism and local exploiting classes on the one hand and the steady and purposeful activity of the Comintern in spreading Marxist-Leninist ideas on the other led the working class in Asian and African countries to realise the need for political organisation. The emergence of communist and

workers' parties in the colonial and dependent countries marked the onset of a new stage in the national liberation movement. The spread of socialist ideas among the working masses created opportunities for combining the struggle for national and social liberation. Under the influence of communist parties the links between different currents of the international revolutionary movement grew stronger.

Although the working class of Asia and Africa was numerically small, the high level of trade union and political organisation gave the working-class movement an exceptionally great importance in the national liberation struggle.

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s there was a noticeable acceleration in the pace of industrial development which helped to strengthen capitalist relationships. By 1938 the share of Latin American countries in the industrial production of the capitalist world reached 3.9 per cent which was roughly equivalent to the share of Japan or Italy.¹

There were substantial differences in the level of social and economic development reached by countries in the region. Whereas Argentina was far in advance of the rest (in 1938 it accounted for 31 per cent of the continent's manufacturing industry²), industry was still at a very early stage in other countries, such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador and the majority of Central American and Caribbean countries. Chile and Mexico lay between these two extremes, as did Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Cuba where capitalist industry was more and more confidently gathering pace. There was also a very considerable gap between levels of development within these countries. For example, in Brazil the level of industrial employment in the state of Piauhys was almost 200 times lower and in the state of Amazonas 800 times lower than in the state of São Paulo. The co-existence of major industrial centres with vast agricultural areas where pre-capitalist relationships still existed was evidence of the distorted development of capitalism in Latin America.

One of the main reasons for this deformation lay in the evergrowing dependence of the Latin American economies on world imperialism. The continent became an arena of bitter rivalry between the principal imperialist powers in which US imperialism gained a definite ascendancy. By pushing their competitors out of the Latin American

¹ *The Latin American Economy in Figures*, A Statistical Reference Book Moscow, 1965, p. 38 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

market, the US imperialists subordinated the foreign trade of Latin American countries to their own interests and ensnared them with onerous loans. The United States complemented its economic expansion with an aggressive foreign policy: it occupied Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Nicaragua more than once and organised provocative actions against Mexico. Through their merciless exploitation of Latin America's natural resources and labour force the foreign monopolies obtained enormous profits.

The double yoke of foreign and local capital made the already poverty-stricken condition of working people in Latin America even worse. The cost of living increased rapidly. According to official statistics, between 1929 and 1939 it increased by 31 per cent in Brazil and 71 per cent in Chile, and between 1931 and 1939 7.3 times in Bolivia. At the end of the 1930s a Mexican worker could buy 7 times less bread from his wages than a US worker, 3.4 times less meat, 4.2 times less milk, 9 times less butter and 4.7 times less sugar, while a Dominican worker could buy respectively 4, 12, 9, 30, and 27 times less than a US worker.¹

The Brazilian slums where hundreds of thousands of workers' families were housed became a symbol of extreme poverty. In the majority of Latin American countries labour legislation was rudimentary. Until the 1930s there was a reasonably developed system of social security only in Mexico, Chile and Argentina.² Legislation on the 8-hour working day existed in a number of countries (Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, etc.) but it was frequently violated by the employers. Modern methods of capitalist exploitation were supplemented by methods inherited from structures prevalent in the 19th century—verbal contracts or the payment of wages in kind.³ Agricultural workers suffered from the worst lack of rights.

Nevertheless, with every passing year the attacks by the ruling classes on the position of working people met with increasingly stubborn resistance. The upsurge in the working-class movement in Latin America between 1918 and 1923 proved convincingly that the proletariat had become a significant social force.

Between 1917 and 1940 the number of workers doubled and reached nearly 10 million. In the more economically developed countries, for example in Chile, the number of factory workers was increasing annually by about 4 per cent. In Argentina the number of indu-

¹ G. Soule, D. Efron and N. T. Ness, *Latin America in the Future World*, New York, 1945, pp. 336-38.

² See Ye. Ye. Kuznetsova, *Latin America: Social Security Problems*, Moscow, 1973 (in Russian).

³ Brandão Lopes, Juarez Rubens, *Crise do Brasil Arcáico*, São Paulo, 1967, pp. 67-70.

¹ Alberto Baltra Cortés, *Crecimiento economico de America Latina*, Santiago de Chile, 1960, p. 122.

ustrial workers increased from 383,500 in 1914 to 544,000 in 1935.¹ A rapid increase in the size of the proletariat was also characteristic for those countries where the economy developed primarily on the basis of extractive industries. Thus in Venezuela the number of oil workers doubled between 1925 and 1931 and reached 20,000.²

Significant numbers of the proletariat were concentrated in the major economic centres. Thus in Brazil in 1940, 34.9 per cent of all industrial workers were concentrated in São Paulo.³ In 1930 about 25 per cent of all workers were to be found in the Federal District of Mexico.⁴ The proportion of factory workers among wage-earners increased. In Mexico in 1930, 50.4 per cent of all workers were concentrated in factories employing more than 50 people, while in Argentina in 1935 the proportion was 65.2 per cent.⁵

As the flow of immigrants tailed off, the role of internal sources in replenishing the working class increased sharply. The entry into its ranks of considerable numbers of rural dwellers had a great influence on forming the social outlook and ideology of the Latin American proletariat. This growing flood of people brought with them a way of life and views which had been formed under the influence of the remaining vestiges of feudal relationships or plantation slavery and this made the process of establishing the proletariat as a revolutionary class in capitalist society a complex matter.

Various ideological and political tendencies waged a bitter struggle for influence over the working class. Anarcho-syndicalism and social-reformism emerged weaker from the revolutionary struggles between 1918 and 1923 and were gradually losing ground in the working-class movement. At the same time the bourgeoisie renewed their efforts to subordinate the working class. National-reformist parties began to emerge and set out to win over broad sections of working people. In view of the growing strength of the proletariat, governments were compelled to follow a policy of social manoeuvring which combined repression with concessions to workers' demands. Thus social reforms designed to ease class contradictions were carried out in Chile in the mid-1920s. Legislation was passed in particular on compulsory social insurance and on the 8-hour working day. In explaining the reasons which prompted him to opt for a reformist policy, President Alessandri of Chile admitted that the establishment of Bolshevism in Russia after the world war had led to an unprecedented flood

¹ *An Outline History of Argentina*, Moscow, 1961, p. 278 (in Russian).

² H. Croes, *El movimiento obrero venezolano. Elementos para su historia*, Caracas, 1973, pp. 55, 66.

³ *Brazil 1943/44. An Economic, Social and Geographic Survey*, Rio de Janeiro, 1944, pp. 238-40.

⁴ A. A. Sokolov, *The Working-Class Movement in Mexico (1917-1929)*, Moscow, 1970, p. 14 (in Russian).

⁵ *The Proletariat of Latin America*, Moscow, 1968, p. 17 (in Russian).

of propaganda penetrating the country which had given the proletariat and middle classes to understand that they were slaves lacking any rights in their own country. The growing consciousness of working people and the middle classes was so powerful, he went on, that there was a danger that a disastrous social revolution with all its terrible consequences would break out. He said that he had tried to avoid this catastrophe by implementing timely gradual reforms. Bourgeois reformism also marked the policy of President Yrigoyen of Argentina and several other political leaders in Latin America.

The church also began to pay a great deal of attention to working-class organisations, especially in Chile where Catholic trade unions operated. Forces connected with the reformist American labour centre, the American Federation of Labour, stepped up their penetration of the Latin American working-class movement and the AFL leader, Samuel Gompers, tried to tie Latin American trade unions to his organisation.

All these forces which were fighting for influence over the working class were opposed by communist parties which grew stronger from year to year. At the end of the 1930s they existed almost throughout the continent. The trade union movement grew stronger to a considerable extent thanks to the efforts of Communists. Everywhere numerous small trade unions organised on the craft principle and therefore disunited were developing into large industrial organisations. National trade union organisations were set up in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Cuba. The Latin American Labour Confederation (CSLA) uniting left-wing trade unions from a number of countries operated between 1929 and 1936. In 1938, the progressive Confederation of Latin American Workers was established to which national trade union organisations with a total membership of 4 million were affiliated.

The development of the working-class movement was complex and difficult. Once it had re-established its strength after the class battles of 1918-1923, the proletariat conducted a determined fight for its own vital interests in the unfavourable conditions of the world economic crisis. In the latter half of the 1930s it became the chief driving force in a broad democratic movement—the Popular Front of struggle against the threat of war and fascism.

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN THE 1920s

The lower intensity of the class struggle after the stormy events of 1918-1923 did not imply passivity on the part of the working class. On the contrary, the latter half of the 1920s was marked by a series of important actions by the proletariat. In Colombia in 1928, a wave of strikes was temporarily halted only through savage reprisals by

the authorities against the strikers.¹ The events of 1921 in San Gregorio in Chile had not yet faded from the memory when the police and the armed militia inflicted severe punishment on workers at the La Coruña mine in April 1925. There was a wave of strikes in Venezuela. In 1925 in Ecuador the strike movement which developed into an open confrontation with the authorities helped to overthrow the conservative government of G. Cordova. In Argentina the working class managed to upset the authorities' plans to repeal the 1922 law on pensions. The Cuban working class carried out a number of major strikes amongst which particularly important was the 21-day strike organised in 1924 by the railway workers' union. The strike movement continued in Uruguay where workers demanded a rise in wages and observance of the law on the 8-hour working day and other legislative acts which restricted the arbitrary power of the capitalists. In a number of cases workers were successful in winning their demands although the low level of organisation in the majority of cases and the lack of firm trade union leadership prevented the Uruguayan proletariat from developing their partial achievements. The Mexican workers waged a determined fight for their rights. After the defeat of railway strikes in the autumn of 1926 and winter of 1927, the working-class movement went onto the defensive. The authorities did not hesitate to carry out physical reprisals against organisers. In 1929 the Communist Party was prohibited.

There was a noticeable increase in the activity of the rural proletariat. In 1924, a strike of workers employed on plantations belonging to the US United Fruit Company flared up in Guatemala and in 1928 in Colombia.

During this period the eyes of the people of Latin America and of progressive people throughout the world were fixed on the republic of Nicaragua. A sharp political struggle in this country developed into a civil war. In order to keep its stooges in power, the United States began a new armed intervention in December 1926. Nicaraguan patriots responded by unleashing an armed struggle against the interventionists and their accomplices and this took on a national character. The insurgent army was headed by the talented commander and courageous fighter for freedom, Augusto César Sandino. Workers, students and progressive-minded military joined Sandino's largely peasant army. One of their main demands was for the withdrawal of the American intervention forces and the abandonment of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States. The Nicaraguan patriots received support from progressive forces throughout Latin America. Hundreds of Latin Americans, including the Salva-

¹ M. Urrutia, *The Development of the Colombian Labour Movement*, New Haven, 1969, p. 106.

dorean José Augustín Farabundo Martí, the Mexican José de Paredes and the Colombian Ardila Gómez, fought alongside the Nicaraguan guerillas.¹

Despite the unequal strength of the opposing forces and treachery by the liberal bourgeoisie, the Nicaraguans' heroic struggle compelled the US troops to leave Nicaragua in January 1933. Unable to get the better of Sandino in an open fight, the reactionaries stooped to the foul murder of the Nicaraguan insurgent leader and his comrades when they came to Managua in February 1934 for talks with the government. Having deprived the movement of its leadership, the reactionaries then fell upon its rank and file members.

The Nicaraguan peoples' experience of the national liberation movement showed that even in a small country revolutionary masses are capable of conducting successful struggle against the imperialists and can force them to retreat. It emphasised the importance of organising a united front of anti-imperialist struggle among different sections of working people. The Nicaraguan events also demonstrated the strength of international solidarity by Latin American fighters against imperialism.

In Brazil, actions undertaken by progressive elements in the army, known as the *tenentistas* (from the Portuguese word for "lieutenant"), were an important event. Between October 1924 and February 1927 a column of 1,500 men headed by a democratic officer, Luis Carlos Prestes (later an outstanding leader of the Brazilian Communist Party), fought almost continual battles with regular troops and police units. The leaders of the uprising saw their main task as inciting the army through their example to rise up against the corrupt government. They did not, however, have a clear programme of social reform and did not attempt to win over the broad masses of people to their struggle. Most of the Tenentista leadership remained a prisoner of anti-communist prejudices. The liberal bourgeoisie supported the revolutionaries only in words, intending to use their strength and authority for its own political aims. The Communists did not at first understand the revolutionary tendency of the Tenentista movement and made contact with its leaders when the armed struggle was already virtually over. The movement was evidence of a profound crisis of the oligarchic regime which soon fell under the pressure from various social and political forces demanding change.

Petty-bourgeois revolutionary democracy also became more active in other Latin American countries. The Federation of Venezuelan Students began an armed struggle against the dictator Gómez. In the Antilles a so-called Negritude tendency emerged but its anti-imperialist and anti-colonial slogans were tinged with racial and na-

¹ X. Campos Ponce, *Los Yanquis y Sandino*, Mexico, 1962, p. 164.

tionalist overtones. In Argentina, Peru and other countries the movement for university reform continued.

Certain petty-bourgeois trends put forward claims to leadership of all the anti-oligarchical forces, including the proletariat. The most important of these was the APRA movement (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*). APRA was founded in Mexico in 1924 by a group of petty-bourgeois radicals from various Latin American countries under the leadership of Haya de la Torre.¹ The aprists recognised that Latin America's social and economic backwardness was due to the predominance of feudal vestiges and foreign imperialism, and at an early stage they put forward anti-imperialist slogans. However, they believed that the Latin American proletariat was not sufficiently mature for independent action and should follow the middle classes.

From the end of the 1920s the revolutionary movement in Latin America began to be penetrated by Trotskyism which found fertile soil among a politically immature section of young people who tended towards petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

The appearance of these new varieties of opportunism in the working-class and national liberation movement, which tried hard to win the allegiance of the working-class movement, placed complex problems before the young communist parties in their fight to win influence over the masses.

In the second half of the 1920s the *communist movement* in Latin America grew significantly bigger and stronger. Communist parties existed in Argentina (1918), Mexico (1919), Uruguay (1920), Chile (1922), Brazil (1922), Guatemala (1922), Honduras (1924), Cuba (1925), Ecuador (1926), Paraguay (1928), and Peru (1928). They had firm links with the working-class movement, devoted a lot of effort to organising action by working people, set up militant, revolutionary trade unions, and strengthened their ties among themselves and with the Comintern.

The Argentine Communists formed one of the leading sections of the communist movement in Latin America, and in many respects their activities served as a guide for other communist parties. The 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Argentina held in 1928 which discussed the question of the nature of the future revolution in Latin America played a great role in developing the communist movement there. In the 1920s there was a certain tendency in the working-class and national liberation movement to underestimate the tasks of the anti-imperialist struggle. Anarchists true to their doctrine of a spontaneous "all-liberating" revolution paid little attention to an analysis

¹ C. M. Rama, *Historia del movimiento obrero y social latinoamericano contemporaneo*, Buenos Aires—Montevideo, 1967, p. 82.

of concrete problems of struggle with imperialism. The Socialists did not perceive any danger of subordination of Latin America to world imperialism in the expansion of foreign monopoly capital.

In their polemics against petty-bourgeois and reformist concepts, the Argentine Communists stressed that Argentina belonged to that group of countries which while formally independent were in fact subordinate to British and US imperialism. Reinforcement of this dependency could lead to the complete loss of national sovereignty. For this reason the problem of the anti-imperialist struggle acquired extreme importance for Latin American Communists.

At the same time, the Argentine Communists noted the inadequacy of the formula, fairly widespread at that time in the communist movement, which defined Latin American countries as semi-colonies. Such an assessment could lead to underrating the socialist perspective of the liberation struggle and the role of the working class in it. The Argentine Communists correctly pointed out that Argentina, Chile and, to a certain extent, Brazil, were close to a number of European countries in the level of socio-economic development and the scope and forms of class struggle.

In its 8th Congress resolutions the Communist Party of Argentina defined the forthcoming revolution as a bourgeois-democratic, anti-imperialist and agrarian, which should open the way to the socialist stage of the revolution.¹ It linked the struggle for liberation from the chains of foreign imperialism and for independent economic development with radical agrarian reform and a determined struggle against the landed oligarchy and the large intermediary bourgeoisie who formed the chief internal source of support for the imperialist policy of enslaving the country. Analysing the nature and aims of the revolution, the 8th Congress pointed out the driving forces: the anti-imperialist content of the revolution assumed an alliance between the working class and the peasantry with the possible participation of petty-bourgeois revolutionary elements.

The Brazilian Communist Party achieved certain successes in the 1920s in winning over the masses and above all the working class. Despite its small size (its membership was no more than a thousand) the Party enjoyed considerable influence among workers in the Federal District, São Paulo and Recife. It published the first issue of its paper *A Classe Operaria* on 1 May 1925.² The Party developed work in the trade unions with a view to achieving the unity of the proletariat as a condition for establishing a worker and peasant bloc, organising a united front of the working masses under the leadership

¹ *Esbozo de Historia del Partido Comunista de la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1948, pp. 64-65.

² A. Pereira, *Formação do PCB. 1922/1928. Notas e documentos*, Rio de Janeiro, 1962, p. 72.

of the conscious vanguard of the industrial proletariat, as the 1st Congress of the bloc specified in its resolution.

The Brazilian Communists had a hard struggle in creating an anti-imperialist front: the Party existed legally for only a short period from January to August 1927. All the same, the Brazilian Communist Party was able to extend its links with the masses and strengthen its authority in the country. The participation of the worker and peasant bloc in the municipal and parliamentary elections of 1928 brought victory, with the Communists Octávio Brandão and Minervino de Oliveira elected city councillors for Rio de Janeiro. The Communists' persistent struggle for unity of the working-class movement led in 1928 to the establishment of the General Confederation of Labour of Brazil, which had more than 80,000 members.

The Communist Party of Chile enjoyed great prestige among the masses. Its leader, Luis Emilio Recabarren, was an example of a genuine working-class leader and people's tribune.¹ After the Ibáñez dictatorship was established in 1927 the Party, which had to go underground, was in effect the only organised force fighting for the restoration of bourgeois-democratic freedoms. Despite the extremely difficult conditions, persecution and police provocation, and the actions of right-wing and left-wing opportunist elements, the Party not only survived but was also able to preserve its position in the trade union movement and to develop work among young people and the peasantry.

The communist movement in Mexico was building up a strong position. Mexican Communists came forward with an initiative to form an Anti-Imperialist League of America which played an important role in the national liberation struggle of the Latin American peoples. The National Peasants' League, set up also with the active participation of the Mexican Communist Party, was affiliated to it. The organisation in 1929 of a new trade union centre which took a class position, the Mexican Unitary Confederation of Trade Unions, was a result of the Communists' work in the trade union movement. The Communist Party's efforts to consolidate the progressive forces raised its prestige among the masses: between 1927 and 1929 it increased its membership from 600 to 2,500. Its further development was impeded by the onset of reaction. In June 1929, the authorities prohibited the Party and closed down its central paper *El Machete* and in December carried out mass arrests of Communists. The Party went underground.

In 1925 the Communist Party of Cuba was founded by advanced elements of the working-class and student movement. It was led by

¹ See V. I. Yermolayev, Yu. N. Korolev, *Recabarren—a Great Citizen of Chile*, Moscow, 1970 (in Russian).

Carlos Baliño and Julio Antonio Mella who were true patriots and convinced Marxists. In 1975, at the 1st Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, Fidel Castro pointed out the merits of the founders of the Party: "The excellent teaching, experience and example of Communists who first started in those glorious days of Baliño and Mella in the heat of the victorious October Revolution contributed to the popularisation of Marxist-Leninist thought in such a way that it became an attractive and indisputable doctrine for many young people who were wakening to political consciousness."¹ From the very beginning, the Party conducted a determined fight against the Machado dictatorship.

The Peruvian Communist Party was founded in 1928 by the outstanding Marxist thinker José Carlos Mariátegui and his comrades (it was called the Socialist Party until 1930). Mariátegui made an important contribution to work on problems confronting the communist movement in Latin America. In the struggle against the APRA's petty-bourgeois doctrine he stressed the need to develop the revolution until it had achieved its socialist aims. He provided a profound analysis of the role the various classes making up Latin American society play in the revolutionary process. In pointing out the limited revolutionary potential of the Latin American bourgeoisie, he wrote that it would be a serious mistake to think that this social class would be seized with the spirit of revolutionary nationalism which was an important factor in the anti-imperialist struggle in different conditions in the semi-colonial countries of Asia enslaved by imperialism over the last few decades.² His early death in 1930 at the age of 35 put an end to the tireless activity of this outstanding revolutionary thinker.

On 23 May 1926, the Constituent Congress of the Socialist Party of Ecuador, under the influence of Communists who had a majority in its leading bodies, took a decision to request the admission of the Party to the Comintern. This date is regarded as the day when the Communist Party of Ecuador (it took its present name in 1931) was founded. A particular merit of the Party was that from the very start it was active not only among the urban workers but also among the most numerous and oppressed section of the Ecuadorian people, the Indians. One of its leaders, J. Gualavisi, who organised the first Communist Party branch among Indians, was also the founder of the first trade union of Indians of Ecuador in 1926. Ricardo Paredes who represented the Party at the Comintern 6th Congress also had tremendous prestige among the Indians.

¹ *First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, Havana. 17-22 December 1975*, Havana, 1976, p. 25.

² *El movimiento revolucionario latinoamericano*, Buenos Aires, 1929, p. 149.

In February 1928, the Paraguayan Communist Party was founded and was accepted into the Comintern in September of the same year. Its paper *Los Comuneros* played no small role in the ideological education of its members who were immediately compelled to work underground.

In the early 1920s efforts were made to set up Marxist organisations in the Central American countries as sections of a Communist Party of Central America which was founded in 1922. On this basis later emerged the Communist Parties of Guatemala (1922), Honduras (1924) and El Salvador (1930). During this period they were still weak organisations. Even the Guatemalan Communist Party, the basis of the Communist Party of Central America, "existed as a group of propagandists of socialist ideas working progressively in organisations which numbered some 100 members".¹ Nevertheless, the Parties were able to establish contact with the masses: they led the struggle to set up trade unions on a class basis and organised meetings and demonstrations by working people.

Thanks to the growing scale of the communist movement, Latin American Communists were able to hold the *first Conference of Latin American Communist Parties* in Buenos Aires in June 1929. The Conference discussed important questions concerning the strategy and tactics of the communist movement, the unity of the working-class and anti-imperialist movement, and the establishment of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The Uruguayan communist leader, Rodney Arismendi, noted that the Latin American Communist Conference of 1929 had acted as an important theoretical and political stimulus to raising fundamental questions regarding the revolution: the anti-imperialist and agrarian content of the revolutionary process on the continent, the upsurge of the trade union movement, and the Party's enhanced political role. This Conference, attended by a delegation from the Comintern, showed that the communist movement in Latin America had reached a new stage of development at which the question of the unity of action of progressive forces had become a practical task for revolutionary Marxists.²

Proletarian internationalism became the basis for consolidating the working-class and communist movement. The idea of proletarian internationalism inspired the Chilean Recabarren to take part in setting up the Communist Parties of Argentina and Uruguay, the Cuban Mella became an active member of the communist movement in Mexico, the Mexican Enrique Flores Magón became a founding member of the Communist Party of Cuba and the young Venezuelan Marxist

¹ Huberto Alvarado Arellano, *Apuntes para la Historia del Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo*, Guatemala, 1975, p. 13.

² See *El movimiento revolucionario latinoamericano. Versiones de la Primera Conferencia Comunista Latinoamericana, Junio de 1929*, Buenos Aires, 1929.

Gustavo Machado joined Sandino's liberation army in Nicaragua. The movement of solidarity with the Soviet Union expanded its activities among working people in Latin America. In Argentina, in May and July 1924, Communists organised a campaign to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and received energetic support from the trade unions. In Cuba, on the day of Lenin's funeral in Moscow, a tree planting ceremony was held in the small township of Regla near Havana in memory of the leader of the world proletariat. The democratic and proletarian press of Cuba published numerous articles, letters and telegrams expressing the deep grief of ordinary Cubans. The Communist Party of Uruguay held a number of public events in homage to Lenin. All these events were used to explain to the masses the cause for which the great leader of the proletariat had given all his life.¹

The links between Soviet and Latin American trade unions grew stronger. The following episode is typical: in March 1927, in response to a request from the Confederation of Mexican Transport Workers to support its members on strike, the central committee of the railway workers' union of the Soviet Union sent 50,000 roubles to its strike fund. This help was assessed by the Confederation as an act of international proletarian solidarity.²

Aware of their international goals, Communists set out to establish a continental trade union centre which would take a class and revolutionary stand. As a result of their efforts the Latin American Confederation of Trade Unions was set up in May 1929 at a congress in Montevideo. The delegates discussed questions regarding the trade union movement in Latin America and outlined its future development. A great deal of attention was paid to the organisation of the agricultural proletariat, the position of women, Indians, blacks and immigrants, and the recruitment of the working-class youth into the trade unions.³ The Confederation which in its early years had a membership of up to 100,000 immediately joined the Trade Union International.

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism Communists also approached the problem of setting up a broad organisation of struggle against imperialism. In 1925, the All-American Anti-Imperialist League was set up. Its activities found the greatest popular support in progressive trade unions and among the democratic intelligentsia,

¹ F. R. Pintos, *Historia del movimiento obrero del Uruguay*. Suplemento de "Gaceta de Cultura", Montevideo, 1960, p. 187.

² A. I. Sizonenko, *The Soviet Union and Mexico—50 Years*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 29-30 (in Russian). The Mexican Communist representative V. Campa spoke about this incident at the 26th Congress of the CPSU.

³ *Bajo la Bandera de C.S.L.A. Resoluciones y documentos varios del Congreso Constituyente de la Confederación Sindical Latinoamericana efectuado en Montevideo en Mayo de 1929*, Montevideo, s.a.

students and literary and artistic people. Organisations from Latin American countries belonging to the League coordinated their actions and established links with progressive organisations in Europe. In 1927, representatives of these organisations took part in the work of the International Anti-Imperialist Congress in Brussels. The Communist Julio Antonio Mella was elected the General Secretary of the American section of the Anti-Imperialist League.

The establishment of this section was an important step in the future formation of the Popular Front movement in Latin America. Concrete actions in support of the Nicaraguan patriots and in defence of Sacco and Vanzetti and other victims of capitalism, and the help given to democratic exiles forced out of their own countries by dictatorial regimes, all helped in the political education of thousands of Latin Americans and prepared them for revolutionary struggle.

Proletarian internationalism, the cornerstone of the communist movement in Latin America, helped to a considerable extent to transform the young Latin American communist parties into a crucial factor in the struggle for the unity of the working class and the consolidation of anti-imperialist forces on a revolutionary basis.

CLASS STRUGGLE DURING THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

The world economic crisis of 1929-1933 had a devastating effect on the Latin American countries. A sharp fall in output, millions of unemployed, the ruination of small and middle businessmen, crowds of hungry people on the roads—this was the general picture from the Mexican highlands to Patagonia.

In Mexico during the crisis silver production dropped by 1.6 times, copper by a half, lead by 2.1 times, and zinc nearly by a half, while oil production fell from 7.1 million to 5.4 million cubic metres.¹ In Brazil the volume of industrial production fell by 28 per cent in 1930. The number of bankruptcies registered at the two main stock exchanges in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1929 and 1930 was three times that in the pre-crisis years,² while world prices for the country's main export, coffee, fell sharply. According to official figures, which were a considerable underestimate, the number of unemployed in Argentina and Mexico was far in excess of 300,000. In Brazil unemployment affected vast sections of the urban and rural working people—in 1930 the number of redundancies reached 2 million which was greater than the total for Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Cuba and Uruguay.

The crisis exposed the severity of Latin America's social and economic problems to an ever greater extent. Political instability and

¹ *An Outline Modern History of Mexico. 1810-1945*, Moscow, 1960, p. 372 (in Russian).

² *An Outline History of Brazil*, Moscow, 1962, p. 298 (in Russian).

frequent changes of government, usually through the use of violence, were typical for the majority of Latin American countries. In some of them, bourgeois reformists were removed from power by reactionary alliances between the landed oligarchy and the military (Argentina, Uruguay), while in others, on the other hand, nationalistically-minded sections of the bourgeoisie came into power in place of openly pro-imperialist governments (Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia).

These political disturbances were due to the profound crisis in socio-economic structures to which neither bourgeois parties nor dictatorial regimes could find any solution. Their programmes envisaged the solution to all problems through continued "cooperation" with foreign capital and cuts in social welfare.

During the crisis the masses became much more active. The working class was in the thick of the stormy political events which shook the continent during this period. A wave of demonstrations and meetings of the unemployed swept the whole of Latin America. The most determined class battles were fought in Chile and in Cuba.

The strike that took place in Santiago on 25-26 July 1931 in which workers, students, teachers, clerks, doctors and even members of bourgeois sections took part, formed the culminant point in the struggle against the Ibáñez dictatorship and led to its downfall. In August 1931 there was a general strike against hunger and deprivation while at the beginning of September there was a mutiny in the navy. A general 48-hour strike was organised in January 1932 under the leadership of the Communist Party of Chile. On 4 June 1932, the garrison in the capital of Santiago rose up and overthrew President Montero. A military junta came to power in which the Minister of National Defence, M. Grove, played the most prominent role. The junta proclaimed Chile a "socialist republic" in which its founders intended to implement the petty-bourgeois ideas of "state socialism". The government's programme included a number of progressive propositions directed at improving the material and legal position of working people and restricting the power of foreign monopolies. However, alongside leaders holding advanced democratic views such as Colonel Grove, in the same government there were also reactionary pro-imperialist politicians like the former Chilean Ambassador to the United States Carlos Dávila.

This government came under pressure from various social and political forces. On the one hand the reactionaries who began to organise their own armed forces prepared for battle, while on the other the Revolutionary Committee of Workers and Peasants led by Communists was set up and in a number of towns workers' Councils were created. The mass movement surged. Meetings and demonstrations were held everywhere. Communists "took part in all meetings and put forward for mass discussion the resolutions of the Revolutionary Com-

mittee of Workers and Peasants which had decided to support the government although, at the same time, urging that it in fact concerned itself with the welfare of the people and took useful steps for this purpose demanded by the broad masses".¹

Aware that left-wing forces were becoming stronger, reactionaries went into attack. On 16 June Dávila carried out a coup d'état with the help of counter-revolutionary troops and started repression against the people. The split among democratic forces helped the reactionaries to achieve their success. There were differences of opinion between the left-wing leaders of the government of the "socialist republic" and the Revolutionary Committee of Workers and Peasants. The Revolutionary Committee was itself unable to rally all revolutionary-minded elements: Socialists and Anarchists withdrew from its membership. Nevertheless the events of 1931-1932 provided a rich experience for the working-class and democratic movement and demonstrated the growing potential of the working class which played a decisive role in overthrowing the Ibáñez dictatorship. These events put in bold relief the issue of unity of anti-imperialist forces.

The working class was also a leading force in the anti-dictatorial, anti-imperialist struggle in Cuba. A general strike began in March 1930 under the slogan of overthrowing the Machado dictatorship. Communists were its chief organisers. In 1931 the situation remained tense: everywhere demonstrations of the unemployed (who by then numbered half a million) were held and strikes flared up. Almost all sections of Cuban society had become dissatisfied with the dictatorial regime. Protests against the dictatorship and its US protectors reached a peak in 1933. Machado tried to stem the tide of revolt with new repressions. The Cuban proletariat responded with mass meetings and strikes which developed on 4 August into a general political strike led by the Communist Party and the National Labour Confederation of Cuba. A revolution started which overthrew Machado on 12 August 1933.

However, the masses were not content with the tyrants' downfall. The anti-dictatorship movement developed into a struggle against the social and political forces which had ensured the domination of US imperialism in Cuba. Nationalist representatives of the petty and middle bourgeoisie came to power on the wave of anti-imperialist action by working people. The government of Grau San Martín (10 September 1933-16 January 1934) passed a number of progressive laws, in particular one on the introduction of the 8-hour working day.

Meanwhile, the popular movement was assuming a broader dimension. People began to seize factories and to distribute ma-

¹ Elias Lafertte, *Vida de un comunista (Páginas Autobiográficas)*, Santiago de Chile, 1957, p. 249.

norial land. In some towns people's Councils were set up. On 16 January 1934, right-wing elements headed by the chief of the general staff Batista which had gained the upper hand in the government carried out a coup d'état. Political forces inclined to do a deal with imperialism and with the local oligarchy came to power. In March 1934, arrests began of labour leaders and Communists.

At its 2nd Congress in April 1934 the Communist Party took a decision to wage a struggle against the reactionary regime and for the victory of the anti-imperialist revolution and the transfer of power to the workers and peasants; it resolved to organise armed detachments and self-defence groups. In March 1935, the working class undertook a fresh attack against the positions of reaction. Strikes took place throughout the country, their main slogan the restoration of the democratic order. They developed into a general strike. With the help of the army and with US support the authorities managed to deal with this strike wave. Thus ended the 1933-1935 bourgeois-democratic revolution in Cuba. But its sacrifices were not in vain. In 1934 the United States was forced to repeal the Platt Amendment which had given it the right to an armed intervention. It retained its military base in Guantánamo and its economic position in Cuba remained firm. But the repeal of the Platt Amendment was regarded by the Cuban people as an important victory towards achieving full sovereignty. The 1933-1935 revolution in Cuba in which the working class played the leading role was extremely important, above all because it took place in a Latin American country most dependent on US imperialism.

At the beginning of the 1930s class battles shook other Latin American states as well. The Brazilian workers were not satisfied with the outcome of the bourgeois revolution of 1930. In October and November 1931 the proletariat in Recife, a major Brazilian city, gave active support to an uprising by revolutionary soldiers. For 3 days the suburbs of Recife were in the hands of the insurgents. In that same year working people in the town of Ithaca in the state of Rio Grande do Sul rose up and established Councils which held power for several days.

The Brazilian Communist Party and the General Confederation of Labour increased their prestige by putting forward concrete demands for an improvement in the material and legal position of the working class: a 30 per cent increase in wages, the right to organise, observance of the 8-hour working day, etc.

The Argentine workers organised a number of major strikes. In 1929, there were 125 strikes including the general strike in San Francisco, the province of Córdoba, which was put down by troops and the police, and a general strike in Rosario. The working class took fresh action in 1932, when the strikes broke out in oil fields, on

tram lines and the telegraph service. Meat packing workers were particularly active in a number of towns.

In Ecuador in August 1931 workers and the unemployed took part in an uprising organised by Radicals and Socialists against the conservative government, which brought representatives of democratic parties to power, though not for long.

Stormy events took place in Peru. Throughout the summer of 1930 there were continued strikes among factory and office workers and unrest among the peasantry. The Workers' General Confederation of Peru founded by Mariátegui organised these demonstrations, in particular the general strikes of 1930 and 1931. The 1931 strike was a particularly militant one and was supported by students and soldiers.

The working-class movement in Venezuela took a qualitatively new step forward during this period and in 1931 the Communist Party was founded.

Actions by the rural proletariat and the Indians were an important feature of the working-class movement in Latin America during the world economic crisis. They were the strongest in Central America. Strikes by agricultural workers in El Salvador developed into a popular uprising in January 1932 against the Martinez dictatorship. It caused serious alarm in the United States and Britain which sent warships to the shores of El Salvador. The uprising was suppressed with exceptional savagery. 20,000 people became the victim of reprisals. The Communist Party of El Salvador suffered a serious blow and many of its leaders died, including the outstanding leader of the El Salvador working-class movement Farabundo Martí. In the same year there was unrest on the plantations owned by US companies in Honduras. In Bolivia, Indians frequently rose up in struggle against the latifundistas. Action by agricultural workers in Colombia in 1929, organised by the United Workers of Magdalena, was supported by dockers and railway workers. Thus a direct link was established between the movement of the rural and the urban proletariat.

During the world economic crisis the Latin American proletariat emerged as a powerful revolutionary force. In some countries, especially in Chile and in Cuba, its actions were the decisive factor in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow reactionary dictatorships. For the first time the rural proletariat expressed itself so powerfully. The working class in the course of its class battles rose to such forms of revolutionary organisation as the Workers' Councils (Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador and Chile). And although these nascent forms of new power were stifled by reaction and their founders were prone to ultra-leftism, the very fact of the organisation of the Councils had a tremendous significance from the point of view of class consciousness.

among the proletariat which had lost its confidence in bourgeois governments. During these years of confrontation, the communist parties accumulated valuable experience and were able in a number of countries to become the chief organiser of actions by the proletariat and to win great prestige among the broad masses of working people.

At the same time, the class battles of 1929-1933 showed that the ruling classes still had quite a lot in reserve and that the proletariat would not be able to win victory over its adversaries on its own. The strategic goal of the working-class and national liberation movement, an anti-imperialist revolution, demanded serious work in organising class and political alliances for the struggle against the chief enemy—imperialism. This task became particularly urgent in the 1920s and the early 1930s when non-proletarian sections of the working people and even certain sections of the national bourgeoisie began to take an active part in the revolutionary movement.

THE STRUGGLE FOR A POPULAR FRONT

The crisis intensified social and political conflicts in the capitalist world to breaking point. In the face of growing activity by the working masses the ruling classes began to restructure their strategy and tactics. Reformist tendencies strengthened in the policy of the ruling circles which hoped to strengthen the capitalist economy and ease the severe social and political tensions through state intervention in the economy and by granting concessions to the working people in small doses.

Reformist elements were inherent in the policies pursued by the governments of Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Brazil. The measures taken by the Brazilian President Vargas in the early years after the 1930 bourgeois revolution were typical in this respect. He set about creating a state sector in the economy and published a number of important labour decrees: an 8-hour working day for industrial workers, arbitration courts, and special conditions of work for juveniles aged between 14 and 16. At the same time, the Brazilian government which primarily expressed the interests of the national bourgeoisie, by no means refrained from using repressive measures.

One way in which the bourgeoisie adjusted to the changing social reality, in which the proletariat had begun to play an immeasurably greater role, was to set up populist parties. In a number of countries these parties, which equipped themselves with anti-imperialist and democratic slogans, grew into mass parties which drew their support primarily from the petty bourgeoisie, the urban middle strata and also a significant proportion of the peasantry and the working

class.¹ Parties of this type existed in Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and, from the end of the 1930s, in Bolivia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and some other countries. These were national-reformist parties with a fairly strong democratic wing. They all had the aim of diverting the working-class movement from a revolutionary path and were all more or less inclined towards anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

From the beginning of the 1930s the ruling classes began to lay their hopes more and more clearly on fascism. Fascist parties and organisations arose in Latin America: the Integralists in Brazil, the para-military terrorist Civil Legion in Argentina, Vanguard of the Fatherland in Uruguay, a "white guard" group in Chile, the Gold Shirts in Mexico, etc.

The fascist movement developed on a particularly dangerous scale in Brazil. The 7th Congress of the Comintern stated that the Integralist organisation has "its branches in the provinces, in the districts, in the schools, the factories, the mills and on the landed estates."² In the course of 18 months the Integralists increased numerically nearly 5-fold and by the end of 1933 they numbered 200,000 people. Working hand-in-hand with the police, the Integralists launched a campaign of terror and intimidation against democrats, trade union organisers and members of the progressive intelligentsia. The Civil Legion in Argentina also had recourse to a tactic of bandit raids. The fascists tried to use university rostrums to propagate their ideas; the law department of the University of Buenos Aires became an ideological centre of fascism in Argentina.³ Pro-nazi elements were particularly active in areas populated by ethnic Germans in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico. The outstanding Chilean poet and political figure Pablo Neruda recalled: "At that time, the time of Hitler's clamorous victories, I had more than once to cross the street in some settlement or city in the south of Chile going through a real forest of banners decorated with the swastika."⁴ The Italian and German embassies acted as centres for the propagation of fascism in Latin America, organising propaganda events, supplying money to pro-fascist groups and organisations and coordinating their policies. In a number of countries the ruling circles displayed a clear tendency to adopt political methods developed by Italian and German fascists.

¹ K. M. Obyden, "Social Democratic Parties in Latin America and the Socialist International", *Rabochy class i sovremenny mir*, No. 5, 1974, p. 50.

² VII Congress of the Communist International. *Abridged Stenographic Report of Proceedings*, Moscow, 1939, p. 306.

³ *Problems of Ideology and National Culture in Latin America*, Moscow, 1967, p. 196 (in Russian).

⁴ P. Neruda, *Confieso que he vivido. Memorias*, Buenos Aires, 1975, p. 189.

The growing strength of the fascist movement in Latin America and the fascist trends in dictatorial and semi-dictatorial regimes presented a serious threat. The danger became even greater because during those years the ruling circles encouraged by foreign imperialism sharply stepped up their war preparations. The Leticia conflict in 1932 between Peru and Colombia and the war over Chaco between Bolivia and Paraguay (1932-1935) were evidence of the increase in militarist tendencies.

The anti-national policy of the ruling circles caused great indignation everywhere. Progressive sections of the intelligentsia, the students, the army and the urban petty bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that it was necessary to develop closer relations with the working class. The road to reaction, fascism and war could only be barred through a counter-offensive by democratic anti-imperialist forces. The change of strategy and tactics by the world communist movement, consolidated in the resolutions of the 7th Congress of the Comintern, also played an enormous role in developing the revolutionary movement in Latin America. The Latin American Communists welcomed the ideas of the Congress enthusiastically.

The Conference of Communist Parties of South America and the Caribbean held in 1934 where the policy of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist alliances was discussed was an important stage in developing a united anti-imperialist front. The fight by Communists to set up anti-imperialist leagues and conduct campaigns of solidarity with the Soviet Union and with the revolutionary movements in the continent helped the Latin American communist parties adopt the new guidelines established by the world communist movement. The slogan of the united anti-imperialist front called for a broader approach to the struggle for a united working-class front at a time when the national liberation movement was on the upsurge. The movement for a Popular Front achieved the most important results precisely in those countries where there was the greatest success in fighting for the unity of the proletariat. Moreover, in a number of countries the Popular Front movement did not confine itself to the struggle in defence of democratic institutions and for removing the fascist threat but rose to tackling the tasks of the anti-imperialist revolution, including the overthrow of reactionary regimes and the establishment of people's power.

The struggle for a Popular Front in Latin America developed along the same lines as in Europe. At the same time in Latin America the common slogans of the Popular Front were backed up with demands arising from the concrete situation in these countries. The cessation of hostilities between Bolivia and Paraguay, amnesties, recognition of the right to form trade unions, protest against police interference in the affairs of labour organisations, and the

preservation of university autonomy, these demands in the Popular Front programme then being formulated reflected the specific features of the situation. General democratic slogans were combined with economic demands of the working class, such as higher wages, a system of social security, a shorter working day, and wage minimum.

Brazil was one of the first countries in Latin America where Communists succeeded in developing a great deal of activity to set up Popular Front organisations. In the autumn of 1934, a mass democratic organisation, the People's Investigation Committee, was set up. It organised public investigations of terrorist acts by the Integralists and police repression in violation of law. The Committee drew its members from revolutionary workers, students and members of the intelligentsia and the armed forces. It became an important stage on the way to a broad front of anti-imperialist and anti-fascist forces. From the beginning of 1935 local organisations of the Popular Front began to be formed, and on 30 March it formed itself into a new democratic organisation known as the National Liberation Alliance (NLA).

The Communist Party was the main organising force in the movement for a Popular Front. On 5 July 1935, the NLA published a programme in which it formulated its main tasks: an end to the domination of imperialist monopoly in the economy through the nationalisation of major industrial enterprises, a fundamental agrarian reform, a ban on fascist activity, and the establishment of democratic government on the basis of the Popular Front. This was a programme for a democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical revolution. It corresponded to the interests of the great majority of the population. Progressive trade unions, the Student Youth Union, the Centre for the Defence of Culture, the Brazilian Union of Women and other democratic organisations all joined the Alliance. By the middle of 1935 the Alliance had rallied about 1,500,000 people.¹ The 7th Congress of the Comintern attached great value to its activities. "In Brazil," Dimitrov said in his speech, "the Communist Party, having laid a correct foundation for the development of the united anti-imperialist front by the establishment of the National Liberation Alliance, must make every effort to extend this front by drawing into it first and foremost the many millions of the peasantry, leading up to the formation of units of a people's revolutionary army completely devoted to the revolution and to the establishment of the rule of the National Liberation Alliance."² The

¹ B. I. Koval, *A History of the Brazilian Proletariat (1857-1967)*, Moscow, 1968, p. 245 (in Russian).

² VII Congress of the Communist International..., p. 172.

slogan "All Power to the Alliance" became the slogan of a mass movement unprecedented in Brazil.

Alarmed by the Alliance's growing strength, the Vargas government and reactionary political circles launched a campaign of gross slander against it in order to dissuade non-proletarian sections from joining it and to divide the Popular Front. Under protection from the authorities the Integralists began to organise' terrorist acts against active members of the Alliance and raids on premises used by labour and democratic organisations. These efforts failed to achieve their objective. The Alliance grew stronger from day to day. Finally, on 12 July 1935, the government resorted to banning the Alliance. Strikes and mass demonstrations took place throughout the country in response to this action.

When the Alliance became illegal the unstable petty-bourgeois elements, not prepared for a difficult struggle, began to leave it. At the same time, some members of the Alliance began to think in terms of immediate action to overthrow the Vargas government. In November 1935, uprisings broke out in a number of cities. Particularly successful was the uprising in the city of Natal where a popular government functioned for several days. However, despite the heroic fight by the revolutionary forces the uprising was savagely suppressed by government forces. Severe sentences were imposed on the Alliance leaders.

The events of 1935 showed that the working class was capable of leading a broad democratic anti-imperialist movement and that the Communist Party was developing into a real vanguard of the working people and a significant political force on a national scale. At the same time, the revolutionary battles of that year displayed certain weaknesses in the labour and democratic movement. The revolutionary forces had not yet acquired the necessary tactical flexibility, had not adopted a sufficiently skillful approach to organising an uprising and had not perceived changes in the mood of the masses.

After the Popular Front had been defeated and after a so-called new state, which was a dictatorship of nationalist bourgeois circles relying for its support on the army, had been proclaimed in 1937, the labour and communist movement in Brazil found itself in a difficult situation. The Communist Party began to reorganise its work in underground conditions.

The Argentine Communists waged a struggle for a Popular Front in difficult conditions. The Justo government which had come to power in 1932 continued the policy of the Uriburu dictatorship towards the labour movement. In December 1932, a law was passed forbidding strikes. The reactionaries aimed their main blow at the communist movement. Armed gangs of fascist thugs organised in the Civil Legion worked closely with the authorities.

The opportunist line followed by the leadership of the General Confederation of Labour (COA), the country's principal trade union centre, created serious difficulties in setting up a broad Popular Front. The prominent union leader Rubens Iscaro wrote: "Having made their way into the leadership of this new centre, these forces imposed on it a pro-government position which was passive and indifferent to the needs of the labour movement."¹

Nevertheless, the Argentine Communists did not retreat in the face of difficulties. By 1935 the Party had managed to carry out considerable preparatory work in setting up Popular Front organisations. Not only Communists but also Socialists, Anarchists and representatives of other political tendencies which rejected dictatorship and fascism demanded the democratisation of political activity and a ban on fascist-terrorist groups. Communists gave their active support to the formation of a Popular Front group in the parliament which united Socialists, Radicals and other anti-dictatorial elements. The Party correctly assumed that the replacement of the Justo regime by a government adopting a position of bourgeois democracy would open up new prospects in the struggle for a genuine Popular Front.

The movement for a Popular Front played an important role in the electoral victory of the opposition in 1936. However, the left-wing parties were not able to form an electoral bloc for the presidential elections and ceded victory to the representative of reaction, Roberto Ortiz. At the same time, the struggle against the threat of fascism stimulated the development of a tendency towards unity in the working-class movement. In the summer of 1939 the congresses of the COA and the Union Sindical Argentina both adopted resolutions to establish close contact between them.

In Colombia there was also an evident desire to consolidate the progressive forces. Thanks to the efforts of the Communist Party, established in 1930, the Confederation of Colombian Workers was formed in 1936. Colombian Communists launched a campaign of protest against the policies of the Olaya Herrera government which had not only failed to fulfil its election promises but was carrying out harsh repression against working people. Political forces were becoming more and more clearly demarcated. In 1934, the left-wing liberal Alfonso López came to power with broad popular support. His government carried through a number of important measures: decrees were issued on the disestablishment of the church and on agrarian reform, free education was provided, the right to strike was proclaimed, and diplomatic relations were established with the

¹ Rubens Iscaro, *Historia del movimiento sindical*, Vol. 4, Buenos Aires, 1974, p. 32.

Soviet Union. The López government implemented all these measures with the support of democratic elements in parliament to which Communists were elected from 1937, and with the support of extra-parliamentary progressive organisations. After a certain retreat due to the election in 1938 of the right-wing liberal Edouardo Santos as president, left-wing forces again seized the political initiative. In 1942 they put Alfonso López back into power. Colombian Communists also contributed to his victory. The Popular Front did not exist as an organisation in Colombia but the fight put up by the Communist Party and other progressive forces for unity of action produced political successes.

In Mexico a sharpening of the class struggle helped to polarise political forces; on the one hand reactionaries tried to create a fascist state, while on the other there was a tendency to form a broad alliance of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces. In 1934, General Lázaro Cárdenas, leader of the left wing of the national-revolutionary party, became president with the help of these forces. His left-bourgeois government, which included elements connected with the petty-bourgeois revolutionary democrats, set about fulfilling a programme of important democratic reforms. In June 1937, it nationalised the railways, while in March 1938 it nationalised the British and US oil companies. This latter measure was particularly important because it represented the Mexican government's response to the refusal by the foreign monopolies to carry out the decision of the Supreme Court to raise the wages of oil workers who had declared a strike. The fact that the government had supported workers on strike produced an enormous impression throughout Latin America. Cárdenas paid a great deal of attention to strengthening the state sector of the economy. Serious steps were also taken in the field of agrarian reform—between 1934 and 1940, 19 million hectares of fertile land were distributed among peasants, although in the final analysis the reform was chiefly of benefit to the bourgeoisie. In the sphere of foreign policy the Cárdenas government and the ruling party followed an anti-fascist line: Mexico supported the Spanish Republic to the very last and condemned Hitler's invasion of Austria.

The anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical policies of the Cárdenas government provoked a hostile response from the reactionaries. In May 1938, General Cedillo who had connections with the nazis and received support from foreign oil magnates organised an anti-government revolt. He miscalculated in hoping that he would be able to win over the people living in the central areas of the country with demagogic promises. With the help of the people the government smashed Sedillo's supporters. In response to attempts by the US imperialists to put pressure on Mexico in regard to the implemen-

tation of the nationalisation programme, the working people organised a broad patriotic campaign.

The new political situation was favourable for setting up a Popular Front. An important precondition for success was the formation in 1936 of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), a mass trade union organisation which increased its membership from 200,000 at the outset to 1,500,000 by the beginning of the Second World War. It was headed by Lombardo Toledano, an outstanding labour leader.

At the end of 1936 the Mexican Communist Party, the Confederation of Workers, and a number of independent trade unions formed the Organising Committee of the Popular Front. The idea of the Popular Front was so popular that it found response in the ruling party, too. In March 1938, the National Revolutionary Party was reorganised into the Mexican Revolution Party (PRM) which in its organisational structure and its objectives corresponded in many respects to the ideas of the Popular Front. Its programme not only reaffirmed the policy of democratic reforms but also declared its tasks "preparing the people for the creation of a working people's democracy and the establishment of a socialist system".¹ Organisations which joined the PRM preserved their independence. The Comintern approved the Communist Party's intention to support the PRM as a possible basis for a future Popular Front. The Confederation of Mexican Workers, the National Peasant Confederation, independent trade unions and cooperative, youth and women's organisations joined the PRM. The Communist Party did not become a formal member although it spoke in favour of an alignment with it. Thus the PRM began to fulfil the functions of an organisation similar to a Popular Front.

However, the Mexican bourgeoisie, politically the most skilful in Latin America, was able to capture leading positions in the movement and to subordinate it to its own interests. So long as President Cárdenas, who relied on the democratic forces, remained in power, the PRM played a positive role in supporting progressive measures taken by the government. With the election to the presidency in 1940 of Ávila Camacho, a right-winger in the party, it became evident that the bourgeoisie was using its leading position in the PRM in order to frustrate the programme of profound anti-imperialist and democratic reforms.

The development of the labour and communist movement in Mexico in the 1930s produced fairly complex and varied results. On the one hand the consolidation of the progressive forces ensured serious successes in defending national independence. On the other hand the fact that agrarian reforms and a number of important anti-imperialist measures (the nationalisation of mineral resources, railways, elect-

¹ *Politica*, No. 89, 1 January 1964, Supplement, p. XXIV.

ricity, etc.) were implemented not under the leadership of the working class but with the predominance of a bloc of the local bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois sections, had an impact on the working-class movement itself. Bourgeois nationalist ideology significantly increased its influence over it.

Communists in Cuba started a struggle to organise a broad alliance of democratic forces. They took the initiative in setting up committees which called for the convening of a Constituent Assembly. These committees, which, besides the Communists, included representatives of various political and public groups, in effect acted as constituent bodies of a Popular Front. In September 1938, the Communist Party emerged from underground and began to establish links with the progressive political organisation Revolutionary Alliance. They soon concluded an agreement for a joint electoral campaign. In August 1939, they merged into a single party, the Revolutionary Communist Union. A great achievement of the Communists was the founding in January 1939 of the Confederation of Workers of Cuba (CTC) which brought together more than 800 trade unions. It was led by the Communist worker Lazaro Peña. Under pressure from the increasingly strong labour and democratic movement, Batista, who held real power, was compelled in 1940 to introduce a new constitution containing a number of important democratic clauses.

There was a widespread struggle to unite progressive and anti-fascist forces in Chile. In this case, too, the leading force was the Communist Party. In August 1935, together with the National Confederation of Workers of Chile (CNTC) and a group of socialists and radicals, it called on all the opposition forces to set up a broad Popular Front. On 8 March 1936, the Radical Party announced its joining the Popular Front and later on the Socialist Party, the Democratic Party and the Front of Trade Union Unity also did so. The establishment of a Popular Front and the struggle to make it stronger was complicated by contradictions between the parties that formed it, since each of them laid claim to its political leadership. Whereas Communists regarded the Popular Front as a powerful weapon for implementing fundamental anti-imperialist reforms in the interests of the working people, many Radicals and Socialists held quite different views. While the left-wing Radicals and some Socialists were willing to cooperate with Communists in tackling revolutionary tasks, the right wing in the Socialist and Radical parties regarded the Popular Front merely as a pre-electoral combination and began to intrigue against the Communists. Despite the efforts by the opponents of the Popular Front, this democratic organisation grew stronger from day to day. The growing tendency towards unity of the labour movement was a fact of extreme im-

portance in strengthening the Popular Front. This became particularly evident after the general strike by railway workers in February 1936 which led to the formation in December of that year of the National Confederation of Workers of Chile (CNTC). The Socialist Diaz Martinez was elected its General Secretary and his deputy was the Communist S. Ocampo.

The Popular Front candidate, the Radical Pedro Aguirre Cerda, won the election in 1938. The Popular Front programme contained the following points: defence of democratic liberties, economic planning, abolition of the monopolies, free education, an improved system of social security, the elimination of unemployment, and agrarian reform.

The first measures taken by the Aguirre Cerda government responded to the wishes of working people: freedom of the press and of assembly was restored, prices for basic food products were lowered, the wages of several categories of workers were increased, a planning body, the Production Development Corporation, was established, bank credits were made available to peasants, and reforms were started in the field of health and education.

Alarmed by this turn of events the reactionaries in complicity with the military tried to carry out a coup d'état in August 1939 but met with failure in the face of a decisive repulse by the Chilean proletariat. The Communist and the Socialist parties and the CNT which had about 400,000 people in its ranks were able to organise a powerful demonstration of support for the democratic government.

The victory in August 1939 created the necessary conditions for moving on to a new stage of social reform. But this did not happen. The growing scale of class struggle frightened those sections of the Chilean bourgeoisie who had at first aligned themselves with the Popular Front or had expressed sympathy with its slogans. The national bourgeoisie whose representatives held key posts in the government in effect arrested the process of reform in the country. At the same time, supporters of the anti-communist general secretary of the Socialist Party Oscar Schnacke, strengthened their position within that party. At the beginning of 1941 the Popular Front fell apart despite the fact that the conditions for its existence, as subsequent events demonstrated, still prevailed. Communists, who were not in the government, were unable to prevent the collapse of the Popular Front. In a subsequent analysis of the reasons for this collapse the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Gailo Gonzales, noted in particular that Communists, while leading the working class, had been unable to transform it into a dominant force in the popular movement, and failed to achieve an alliance between the working class and the peasantry capable of compelling the bourgeoisie to carry out consistently the Popular Front programme.

Although the Popular Front movement in Chile was unable to deal reaction a decisive blow, it expressed the enormous potential of the working-class and democratic movement and proved its viability. An upsurge in the anti-imperialist and democratic movement in Latin America occurred also in those countries where broad alliances of democratic forces did not yet exist. Local organisations of the Popular Front were set up in Uruguay. A democratic association known as the Anti-Fascist Movement, which included progressive workers and students, functioned in Peru. Progressively-minded military groups were brought to power in 1936, although not for long, in Paraguay and Bolivia thanks to an upsurge in the popular movement.

The broad campaign of solidarity with the Spanish people was of great importance in consolidating democratic forces in Latin America. When the Civil War began in Spain volunteers set out from Latin America to join the fight against fascism on Spanish soil. The Mexican Communists Carlos Contreras and David Alfaro Siqueiros and the Argentine Communist Ortiz became commanders in the International Brigades. The Argentine Communist Victorio Codovilla performed an extremely important Party assignment—he organised the international committee of aid to republican Spain and directed its work. Latin American Communists paid a great deal of attention to informing their people of the successes won by fraternal parties in other countries in the struggle against fascism and the threat of war.

The achievements of workers and peasants in the Soviet Union acted as a powerful stimulus in the struggle of working people in Latin America for their rights and for the creation of a Popular Front. In their political work communist parties spent a lot of time and energy in informing their people of the successes achieved by the Soviet Union in building socialism. They correctly regarded this as practical implementation of the vital principle of the international communist movement—the principle of proletarian internationalism. An outstanding Latin American Communist, Victorio Codovilla, told how profoundly stirred he and his comrades were by the words of the general secretary of the Comintern, Georgi Dimitrov, when he said that the attitude towards the Soviet Union constituted a historic division between the forces of fascism, war and capitalism on the one hand and, on the other, the forces of peace, democracy and socialism; it was not a purely formal attitude towards Soviet power and socialism but the attitude which was concretely adopted towards the Soviet Union.¹

¹ Victorio Codovilla, *Una trayectoria consecuente en la lucha por la liberación nacional y social del pueblo argentino*, Vol. II, Buenos Aires, 1964, p. 331.

The strong pulse of political activity found a response in the consciousness of great masses of people who had entered the movement for the first time. The sharp struggle between the various political trends to win over the masses began to swing more and more clearly in favour of the forces of social progress. During this period a serious crisis seized hold not only of right-wing dictatorships but also, in a number of countries, of national-reformist regimes. Inadequate programmes of national-reformism could no longer satisfy genuine anti-imperialist revolutionary democrats. A typical incident occurred when Antonio Guiteras, a Cuban revolutionary youth leader, broke with the national-reformists and openly accused the Grau San Martín government of being incapable of maintaining anti-imperialist tactics.¹ The establishment of the National Liberation Alliance in Brazil helped to radicalise the views of many former Tenentistas who were disenchanted with the policy of the Liberal Alliance and its leader G. Vargas. In the face of the fascist threat the more consistent democrats were drawn increasingly to the communist parties which were the most resolute force in the struggle against the oligarchy and imperialism. The fight against fascism was a decisive factor in strengthening the scientific communist views of such outstanding representatives of the progressive Latin American intelligentsia as E. Trois in Argentina, Jorge Amado in Brazil, Rafael Ramos Pedrueza in Mexico, Pablo Neruda in Chile and many others.

The influx of new forces to the communist movement helped it to develop. At the same time the strengthening of left-wing elements in the trade unions and the involvement of trade unionists in the political anti-fascist struggle led to a growth of the proletarian core in communist parties and consolidated their principal social base.

The working-class movement itself received a powerful new impetus in the 1930s. Its centripetal tendencies grew stronger. Since the struggle against the threat of war and fascism could only successfully develop on the basis of the unity of action of all democratic forces, it was first and foremost necessary to achieve the unity of the working class itself since it represented the backbone of the Popular Front. In assuming a leading role in the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggle the working class was able to tackle more successfully the question of overcoming a split not only nationally but throughout the continent.

The events of the 1930s made a remarkable page in the history of the working-class and national liberation movement in Latin America. They became an important revolutionary school for the working class which grew into the most powerful and consistent force

¹ Adám Anderle, *Algunos problemas de la evolución del pensamiento antiimperialista en Cuba entre las dos guerras mundiales: comunistas y apristas*, Szeged, 1975, p. 39.

in the struggle for democracy and social progress. Both ideologically and politically, these events forged communist parties which developed into genuinely revolutionary parties of the working class. The Popular Front in Latin America developed towards a solution of the tasks connected with the democratic and anti-imperialist revolution. It stemmed the tide of fascism in Latin America and countered the plans of the reactionaries with the will of working people who rose in defence of democracy. The struggle of the Latin American proletariat against the threat of fascism and war formed an important constituent of the world revolutionary process. It prevented Latin America from becoming a bastion of fascism which had already launched a criminal war against the nations.

Part Four

IN THE VANGUARD
OF THE ANTI-FASCIST WAR
OF LIBERATION

IN DEFENCE OF SOCIALISM AND WORLD CIVILISATION

The Soviet working class began to tackle the task of consolidating and developing victorious socialism in the period when wars between various capitalist countries were growing into the Second World War. Imperialism did not give up its hopes of deciding its historic dispute with socialism by force of arms. There was a striving among ruling circles in the imperialist countries to solve inter-imperialist conflicts at the expense of the world's first socialist state. Fascist Germany was preparing for war while its imperialist rivals were pursuing a policy of appeasement in the hopes of isolating the Soviet Union and directing fascist aggression against it. The Munich Agreement of September 1938 was the culminating point of this policy. The British and French governments satisfied Germany's annexationist claims to Czechoslovakia. It was pointed out at the 18th Congress of the CPSU that the British and French governments "ceded areas of Czechoslovakia as the price for an undertaking to start war against the Soviet Union".¹ The Soviet Union resolutely condemned the Munich deal as a crude act of violence against Czechoslovakia and as a flagrant violation of international law.

The Anglo-German Declaration of September 1938 and the Franco-German Declaration of December of the same year, which in effect were non-aggression pacts, formed an integral part of the Munich deal. In July 1939, Britain signed an agreement with Japan whereby it effectively recognised Japanese territorial seizures in China. This Far-Eastern Munich made China the victim of aggression in the same way as Czechoslovakia was the victim of the European Munich.

The policy of appeasement increased the threat of war and encouraged the fascist countries to new acts of aggression. On 15 March

¹ 18th Congress of the CPSU. 10-21 March 1939. Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1939, p. 14 (in Russian).

1939, Hitler liquidated the Czechoslovak state. On 21 March he demanded the incorporation of Danzig (Gdansk) into Germany, and the following day Nazi troops marched into the Lithuanian town of Klaipeda. On 7 April 1939, Hitler's ally Mussolini unleashed aggression against Albania.

The Soviet Union acted determinedly to put a stop to the aggressive acts of the fascist powers. The Soviet government saw its main task in preventing the establishment of a united anti-Soviet front and organising the repulse of fascist aggression. During the tragic days of Munich the Soviet Union was the only state which declared its readiness to give Czechoslovakia military support. However, the government and president of Czechoslovakia did not turn to the Soviet Union for help.

The Soviet government protested sharply against the fascist occupation of Czechoslovakia and declared that it did not recognise the incorporation of Czechoslovak lands into the German Reich. It continued vigorous efforts to persuade the British and French governments to undertake joint actions in order to put a stop to fascist aggression. In March 1939, the Soviet Union initiated Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations around a proposal to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance, to be followed by a military convention.

However, Britain and France in effect sabotaged these negotiations. Moreover, in the spring and summer of 1939 secret Anglo-German negotiations were held with a view to reaching agreement with Hitler Germany on demarcating spheres of influence on a world scale. Fascist Germany, however, was no longer interested in new agreements. Having weighed the balance of forces in Europe and in the world, the fascist rulers decided to direct their first blow not against the Soviet Union but against their own capitalist rivals. On 1 September 1939, Hitler moved his armies against Poland. The British and French governments which had given Poland guarantees concerning its security were compelled to declare war on Germany.

The Second World War began. At this stage it was a clash between two imperialist groupings and reflected an exacerbation of imperialist contradictions. Nevertheless, it was significantly different from the 1914-1918 War. The existence of the Soviet Union played a decisive role in changing the character of the Second World War. The fact that not only bourgeois-democratic states but also, and even more so, a socialist state, stood in the way of German imperialism achieving world domination laid its imprint on the development of the Second World War from the very beginning.

The fascist war machine crushed a number of European states. The peoples of these countries which were included in the monstrous system of Hitler's New Order were enslaved, deprived of elementary democratic rights and subjected to savage terror. From the very

first moment of attack the struggle of these peoples was just, liberation struggle for freedom and national independence.

In these exceptionally complex circumstances the Soviet state conducted a purposeful and consistent policy. Above all, the line followed by the men of Munich could not be allowed to triumph. This was all the more important because in 1939 the Soviet Union was faced with the danger of war on two fronts (in the Far East during this period major battles were being fought on the river Khalkhin Gol against Japanese forces which had invaded the territory of Mongolia allied with the Soviet Union). After it had become fully apparent that it was impossible to persuade France and Britain to organise effective joint action against the bloc of fascist countries, the Soviet government was compelled to conclude the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939.

"The Party Central Committee and the Soviet Government," Marshal Zhukov wrote later, "proceeded from the fact that the pact did not deliver the USSR from the menace of fascist aggression but made it possible to gain time to strengthen our defences and hinder the emergence of a united anti-Soviet front".¹ In the prevailing circumstances, the time gained was exceptionally important for preparing the country for the future fight against fascism.

In March 1940 the Soviet-Finnish conflict provoked by reactionaries was settled. On 13 April 1941, the Soviet Union concluded a neutrality treaty with Japan. The actions of the Soviet government upset the anti-Soviet plans of the reactionaries, warded off the blow prepared by the combined forces of imperialism against the Soviet Union and allowed it to gain time to strengthen the country's defences.

The years 1939-1940 saw the successful conclusion of the struggle waged over many years by the people of West Byelorussia, West Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bessarabia and North Bukovina to re-establish Soviet power and rejoin the peoples of the Soviet Union.² A significant territorial expansion of socialism was thereby achieved and this had great importance from the defence point of view in the forthcoming conflict with fascist Germany. Nevertheless, the danger of fascist aggression against the Soviet Union continued to exist.

Even after war had been declared neither France nor Britain took any active military actions against Germany. The fascist General Alfred Jodl admitted later that if they did not suffer defeat in 1939, this was only because approximately 110 French and British divi-

¹ *The Memories of Marshal Zhukov*, New York, 1971, p. 225.

² For details see Chapter 2.

sions which stood in the West against 23 German divisions remained completely inactive.¹

The "phoney war" conducted by Britain and France did not in fact bar the path to fascist expansion. In 1940 Hitler's forces seized Denmark, Norway, Holland and Luxembourg and routed France. In the spring of 1941, fascist Germany overrun the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula.

After they had put France out of action, weakened Britain and considerably increased their own military and economic capacity, at the expense of the subjugated countries of Europe, the Nazis felt that conditions were favourable for directing a blow against the East. They stepped up their direct preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union.

SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION IN THE SOVIET UNION ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The working class and all working people in the Soviet Union, while strengthening the defence capacity of the country, continued to build socialism.

The CPSU 18th Congress, held in March 1939, stressed that the Soviet Union had entered the stage of *completing the construction of socialist society*. The Congress formulated the basic economic task of the Soviet Union as catching up with and overtaking the main capitalist countries in per capita output. The Third Five-Year Plan for the development of the national economy approved by the Congress pointed to the need to expand and improve the quality of the material and technical base for socialism, to improve socialist production relations, significantly increase people's standard of living, and strengthen the defence capacity.

An increased pace of development for the defence industry was envisaged alongside the development of the civil sectors of the economy. Alongside the reconstruction of the defence industry in the north-west, the centre and the south of the European part of the Soviet Union, plans were drawn up to establish a new base in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia.

The Congress pointed out the enormous importance of achieving a further increase in the number of skilled technical personnel and the need for a substantial rise in the cultural level in the mass of working people in town and country in order "to make a major step forward in the historic cause of *raising the cultural and technical level*

¹ See *The History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. 1941-1945*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1963, p. 207 (in Russian).

of the working class, the advanced and leading force in socialist society, to the level of engineering and technical specialists".¹

A great deal of attention was paid to the communist education of working people, to the development of socialist norms of living, and to developing the moral qualities of builders of socialism among Soviet people.

The organised recruitment of workers from villages, previously important, no longer satisfied the growing demands of industry. On 2 October 1940, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet adopted a Decree on the USSR's labour reserve, which provided for the organisation of vocational and railway schools and factory apprenticeship schools with an annual output of between 800,000 and 1,000,000 workers of various skills. The Decree found a broad response among young people. During three years of the Third Five-Year Plan 4,200,000 workers were trained in schools and at factory courses.²

At the same time, the training of qualified engineers and technicians was improved. Between 1938 and 1940 the average annual output of higher education colleges increased more than 1.5 times in comparison with the Second Five-Year Plan period, while that of secondary specialised colleges increased 1.8 times.³

In order to ensure a steady supply of skilled workers for the new factories, especially in the Urals, Siberia and in the Far East, and for those which had been switched over to war production it became necessary to reallocate the labour force among various factories and economic regions. Workers were sent to the eastern part of the country as a result of the relocation of industry and appeals to the public. The Young Communist League, which in 1940 had a membership of about 10,400,000 of whom 1,300,000 were employed in industry,⁴ took an active part in organising appeals to the public. The YCL took over responsibility for the major new construction sites of the Third Five-Year Plan—the Second Baku oilfields, the Amurstal steel works and the Akmolinsk-Kartaly railway, and also the development of the Moscow and Donetsk coalfields and the build-up of the Soviet Union's large sea- and ocean-going fleet. In 1939 and 1940, over 400,000 young men and women went off to work on construction sites under the auspices of the Young Communist League.⁵

¹ *The CPSU in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenary Meetings*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1971, p. 341 (in Russian).

² G. I. Zelenko, "Training a Skilled Work Force", *Labour Issues in the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1958, p. 100 (in Russian); *Profsoyuzy SSSR*, No. 3, 1941, p. 17.

³ *Cultural Construction in the Soviet Union. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1956, p. 204 (in Russian).

⁴ *History of the Soviet Union from Ancient Times to the Present Day*, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1972, p. 400 (in Russian).

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.

In order to speed up the pace of industrial development dictated by the defence necessity, measures were taken to increase the length of the working day and strengthen labour discipline. The measures taken by the Communist Party and Soviet government could only be effective if receiving the conscious approval and support of working people. The upsurge in mass creative activity and enthusiasm for work were proof that the Soviet people were deeply aware of the need for strict self-discipline to strengthen the nation's defence.

Increased activity at work which found its expression in a new wave of socialist emulation made the intensive economic development plans a reality. On 1 July 1940, metal industry workers launched a national emulation campaign. Factory after factory, section after section, strove to take the lead under the slogan "More metal for the nation, strengthen our economic independence"

In the summer of 1940, coal miners joined in the movement, in September—oil workers, and in early 1941 workers in the cement, engineering, textile and food industries, and road construction followed suit. There began a movement for multi-lathe operation and for combining different skills and mastering similar jobs.

In Krivoi Rog the innovator-driller A. I. Semivolos serviced 18 mine faces instead of just one. His method was further improved by Ural miner I. P. Yankin who in addition to a multi-face drilling operated several tools. A senior engine driver in Tomsk, N. A. Lunin, and members of his team mastered a number of adjacent skills and as a result reduced the amount of repair work and stoppages and increased the length of engine working time and run. At the beginning of 1941, there were over 9,000 Lunin teams working on the railways.

Many production innovators were promoted to leading positions and improved their skills at various training courses and in colleges. A. G. Stakhanov, K. Kh. Busygin, I. I. Gudov and others attended the Industrial Academy in Moscow. Leading miners N. A. Izotov and N. D. Kasaurov became heads of coal fields in the Donbass, while M. D. Dyukanov was elected secretary of the City Party Committee. Former engine drivers P. F. Krivonos, A. S. Ognev and V. D. Bogdanov were appointed head managers of important railways.¹

The Soviet trade unions, the major mass organisation of the working class numbering in 1941 more than 25 million members, played an important role in developing the socialist emulation movement.

In February 1941, the 18th Party Conference reviewed the results of economic construction in 1940 and discussed the national economic plan for 1941. Industrial output had increased by 11 per cent in 1940 over the previous year.² The Conference adopted an

¹ *The Soviet Working Class. A Short Historical Account (1917-1973)*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 348-49 (in Russian).

² *The CPSU in the Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 471.

even more intensive economic plan for 1941, which proceeded from the task of strengthening the autonomy and independence of the socialist economy at the start of the Second World War and the need to maintain the country prepared and mobilised.

In response to the decisions of the Conference, the Soviet working class displayed new forms of creative activity. In the town of Dneprodzerzhinsk the Dzerzhinsky metallurgical factory, one of the best in the country, launched an appeal to the workers in the iron and steel industry to complete the half-yearly plan ahead of time.¹ The appeal was supported by workers at the Kirov metallurgical factory in Makeevka, at the Petrovsky factory in Dnepropetrovsk, at the Hammer and Sickle factory in Moscow, the Novotulsky metallurgical factory and many others. Miners at Krivoi Rog declared in an open letter to iron and steel workers: "Produce more iron and steel, more rolled steel! There will be no shortage of iron ore. We will give you as much iron ore as you need to overfulfil the half-yearly plan."²

Measures taken to strengthen labour discipline and to improve economic management as well as the development of socialist emulation had an effect on the growth of productivity. Thus, at the beginning of 1941, the 4 engineering industry ministries reported a 30 per cent increase in productivity compared to 1938.³

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the working class, on the eve of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet Union possessed a significant material and technical base. The gross industrial output in 1940 was 7.7 times the 1913 level, production of the means of production was 13.4 times, and engineering and metal output was 29.6 times. Over the same period energy inputs per worker had increased 5-fold, electricity inputs per worker 8-fold, and the labour productivity of industrial workers had increased 3.8 times.⁴

In engineering, tractor and oil production the Soviet Union held first place in Europe and second place in the world, in electric power, aluminium, iron and steel production—the second place in Europe and the third in the world, in coal and cement production—the third place in Europe and the fourth in the world. The Soviet Union's defence capacity achieved great strength on this industrial basis.

The Communist Party considered it necessary to prepare a safe rear in the event of war. Three main reasons dictated the need to build up industry in the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia: the presence in these areas of vast untapped natural resources; the need to level out the economic development of

¹ *Pravda*, 15 May 1941.

² *Pravda*, 20 May 1941.

³ *Partiynoe stroitelstvo*, No. 4-5, 1941, p. 114.

⁴ *50 Years of the Land of Soviets. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 51-52 (in Russian).

former peripheral ethnic areas in order to ensure real equality for all nations and ethnic groups living in the country; and the military-strategic need to create a second industrial base in the east of the country. Between 1938 and 1940 the volume of industrial output increased 1.5 times in this area; new metallurgical and coal mining centres were established. By the summer of 1941 almost one-fifth of all munitions factories were located in the eastern part of the country.¹

In the extremely complex international situation the Soviet Union was compelled to substantially increase allocations for defence—from 34.5 billion roubles in 1939 to 83 billion roubles in 1941.² In 1940 a third and in 1941 43.4 per cent of the budget was allocated to the defence programme.³ Whereas between 1938 and 1940 the average annual increment in total industrial output was 13 per cent, it was 39 per cent for defence production.⁴

The Party and the government implemented a number of important measures for restructuring the defence industry and expanding military output. This made it possible to increase the stocks of military equipment and armaments and to start on the technical re-equipment of the Red Army. This job had not, however, been completed by the beginning of the war.

Measures were taken to increase the combat capacity of the armed forces. On 1 September 1939 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a new law on universal military conscription. The call-up age was lowered from 21 to 19 years and for the secondary school graduates—to 18 years. A system of elementary military and pre-call-up training of young people and of military training for the population was introduced.

The working class trained future soldiers at the enterprises. Party and trade union organisations took in hand the physical training of young people and taught them specialised military skills (pilots, tank drivers, snipers, motorcyclists and radio operators). Marks-men's competitions and civil defence exercises in preparation against air-raids and chemical warfare were held. Women also took an active part in preparing to defend the nation. Nurses' groups were set up in factories. Many women workers were learning to operate radios and took up elementary military training.

At the beginning of 1941, the Society to Assist the Army, Air Force and Navy had 13 million members. More than 35 per cent of Party

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 5, Book 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 120 (in Russian).

² G. S. Kravchenko, *War Economy of the USSR. 1941-1945*. Moscow, 1963, p. 64 (in Russian).

³ *Kommunist*, No. 12, 1968, p. 65.

⁴ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1980, p. 455 (in Russian).

members and 31 per cent of Young Communist League members were active in the Society.¹

By the middle of 1941, there were over 5 million people in the Army and Navy as against 1,500,000 at the beginning of 1938.² The command of the armed forces was closely linked with the masses. In the middle of 1940 almost 40 per cent of all commanding officers were of working-class origin.³

The working class' broad participation in military patriotic work and its firm support for all measures taken by the Party and the government to strengthen the country's economic and defence capacity were extremely important in further consolidating all Soviet working people around the Communist Party, raising the social and political activity of the masses and their readiness to stand, arms in hand, in defence of the achievements of the October Revolution.

In his assessment of the achievements of the pre-war Five-Year Plans, L.I. Brezhnev observed: "Some things could unquestionably have been accomplished faster, better and with less cost. But in order to arrive at an objective assessment of the road that has been covered it should always be remembered that for us every step was a quest and every advance was achieved in increasing struggle against enemies within the country and in the world arena."⁴

ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

On 22 June 1941 fascist Germany treacherously attacked the Soviet Union.

The aggression by fascist Germany was an attempt to destroy the new socio-economic formation by armed force and to wipe the socialist state of workers and peasants from the face of the earth.

Headed by fascist Germany, the most reactionary forces of imperialism entered the war enjoying military and economic superiority.

For its war against the Soviet Union fascist Germany assembled 190 divisions, numbering 5,500,000 troops, 47,200 artillery pieces, about 4,300 tanks and nearly 5,000 planes.⁵ The situation was extremely unfavourable for the Soviet Union and its army. In the western border areas Soviet forces numbered 170 divisions and 2 brigades totalling about 2,700,000 troops; they were equipped with 37,500 artillery pieces, 1,475 new tanks and 1,540 combat aircraft (of a new type).⁶ By exploiting temporary advantages obtained as

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 5, Book 1, p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³ *The Soviet Working Class...*, p. 353.

⁴ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 16-17.

⁵ *History of the Second World War. 1939-1945*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 21 (in Russian).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

a result of their prolonged preparations for war against the Soviet Union, the suddenness of the attack and their experience of modern warfare acquired in the course of military campaigns in the West, the Nazi invaders penetrated deep inside Soviet territory.

Miscalculations made in assessing the moment of attack by fascist Germany and in preparing to repulse the aggressors' first blows lay behind the Red Army's initial defeats in border areas and its enforced retreat to the rear of the country. The attack came suddenly for the Soviet troops and they were unable to check Hitler's army in defensive positions. This prevented troops moved up from distant parts of the country from entering into battle in a more organised fashion.

The Soviet government and Communist Party were faced with the task of mobilising the whole of society's strength for the defeat of the invaders. In this they drew on the advantages of the socialist system.

In extremely difficult circumstances, the Communist Party and Soviet government concentrated their main efforts on putting the whole life of the country on a military footing. This programme was laid down on 29 June 1941 in a directive issued by the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government to all Party and government organisations in front-line districts. In explaining the nature of the war and the tasks facing the country, the Party pointed out that the aim of the fascist attack on the Soviet Union was to "destroy the Soviet system, seize Soviet lands, enslave the peoples of the Soviet Union, plunder our country, seize our cereal crops and oil, and restore the power of the landowners and capitalists... This war imposed on us by fascist Germany will decide the question of the life and death of the Soviet state and whether the peoples of the Soviet Union will be free or will fall into slavery."¹

The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government called on the people to get rid of peacetime mood. In order to remove the grave danger hanging over the nation it was essential to restructure all work on a military footing, to organise all-round help for the front, to increase arms production in every way and to direct all efforts to the defeat of the enemy. The Party called on Soviet people to develop guerilla struggle in the rear of the invaders and to create in the enemy-occupied areas "intolerable conditions for the enemy and all his accomplices, to pursue and destroy them at every step and to disrupt all their measures".²

The Party explained to the Soviet people and the whole world the liberation nature of the Soviet Union's war against fascist Germany

¹ *The CPSU on the Soviet Armed Forces. Documents of 1917-1968*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 299-301 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 300.

as a national patriotic war, as a war for the liberation of the peoples of Europe and for winning a prolonged and secure peace.

The State Defence Committee under the chairmanship of J. V. Stalin was set up on 30 June 1941. It assumed full powers and complete state, military and economic control. A Supreme Command Headquarters was set up, headed by Stalin, who was also appointed People's Commissar for Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

The Party concentrated its best forces in key sectors of work in the Army and in the rear. By a decision of the Politbureau of the Central Committee, 54 members, and alternate members of the Central Committee and 13 members of the Central Audition Commission were assigned to military work. During the initial stages of the war altogether 500 secretaries of republican, territorial, regional, city and district Party committees, 270 senior Party officials, and 1,265 regional and district Party officials joined the armed forces.¹ Prominent Party and state leaders, L.I. Brezhnev, J.E. Kalnberzinš, N. S. Khrushchev, A. A. Kuznetsov, D. Z. Manuisky, P. K. Ponomarenko, A.S. Shcherbakov, A.Yu. Sniečkus, M.A. Suslov, K.Ye. Voroshilov, A.A. Zhdanov, etc., were assigned to military work and many undertook important organisational and political work in the Army and in the rear. M.I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, frequently visited the front and the rear areas of the country, speaking at rallies and calling on the people to fight the Nazi invaders. Defence Committee members N.A. Voznesensky, A.I. Mikoyan, Central Committee Secretary A.A. Andreev, Soviet TUC chairman N.M. Shvernik headed key sectors of the economy which ensured supplies for the Red Army.

In the first 6 months of the war alone, more than 1,100,000 Communists, a third of the civilian membership, became members of the armed forces. 60,000 Communists and 40,000 YCL members were sent to the front as political officers.² In restructuring its ideological and political work, the Central Committee followed Lenin's guidelines that "in the final analysis, victory in any war depends on the spirit animating the masses that spill their own blood on the field of battle. The conviction that the war is in a just cause ... strengthens the morale of the fighting men and enables them to endure incredible hardships."³

The Communist Party's call to subordinate everything to the

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 5, Book 1, p. 170.

² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 171-72.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the Enlarged Conference of Workers and Red Army Men in Rogozhsko-Simonovsky District of Moscow, May 13, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 137.

interests of the front and the achievement of victory was wholeheartedly supported by the people.

*The Soviet working class led by the Communist Party was in the vanguard of the struggle against the most evil enemy of freedom-loving peoples. "In these historic days, coming to the factories one can see for oneself the might of the working class which rises, arms in hand, for a just cause," Pravda wrote at that time, "see how the working class is united and how great is its confidence in the victorious outcome of this duel imposed on our people by Hitler Germany."*¹

Hundreds of thousands of workers in army greatcoats took the first blow on land, in the air and on the sea and displayed exceptionally firm courage and heroism in defence of the country's borders. The Soviet working class' initiative in setting up volunteer corps was vivid proof of its patriotism. The Party Central Committee approved the initiative. By 7 July 1941, 12 divisions had already been formed in Moscow and in 10 of them workers made up the majority. A number of enterprises formed their own volunteer battalions and regiments. During this same period 25 extermination battalions were established, their core made up of workers and nearly half of them Communists. These battalions searched out enemy scouts, spies and saboteurs and guarded the most important military and economic installations.

The city of Leningrad formed 10 volunteer divisions and in 7 of these the majority were workers. In fact one of them was drawn entirely from workers at the Kirov Works while another was made up of workers employed in factories in the Moskovskaya Zastava district.

Extermination battalions and volunteer units were set up in the Ukraine, in Byelorussia and in the Baltic region. In Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, volunteer corps were organised at the Arsenal, Bolshevik, Leninskaya Kuznitsa and Karl Marx factories. In October 1941, 175,000 volunteers called to arms by Party organisations in Makeevka, Gorlovka, iron and steel plants and mines came to the defence of the Donbass.

Hundreds of thousands of workers went to construct the defences of Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa, Smolensk, Vyazma, Bryansk, Moscow, and the Donbass. Teams of workers joined the ranks of local anti-aircraft defence posts in the towns, factories and at the railway junctions. Many women workers joined Red Cross groups.

The formation of volunteer corps was a natural result of the mass movement of the working class supported by the entire population. It was proof of the high level of patriotism and socialist consciousness of the leading class in Soviet society. In the difficult days of the

¹ *Pravda*, 8 July 1941.

summer and autumn of 1941, about 60 volunteer divisions, hundreds of other volunteer formations (totalling up to 2 million fighters) and 1,755 extermination battalions (over 328,000 fighters) were set up, and about 10 million people took part in constructing defences. Towards the end of 1941, 286 Red Army infantry divisions were newly formed.¹ In the course of 6 months, in an extremely difficult war situation armed forces were formed superior to all that the country had possessed before the attack by fascist Germany.

The first months of the war were extremely tense. The Red Army was retreating. Units encircled by the enemy fought with exceptional bravery but suffered heavy losses. Those who managed to break out continued the struggle and joined the ranks of the guerillas and the underground resistance.

During a fighting retreat the Soviet forces were exhausting crack enemy troops and causing them heavy losses. Mass heroism and tenacity were shown by Soviet troops in the defence of many battle-lines and towns. Together with units of the Red Army, battalions of workers in Riga, Daugavpils, Tallinn, Mogilev, Bobruisk, Orsha, Minsk, Kiev, Smolensk, Elnya, and other cities defended their positions to the last possible moment. Workers from the Arsenal Works, a revolutionary stronghold in the past, and from other factories were among the defenders of Kiev. Fortifications, barricades and defence strongholds were built by the dedicated labour of all citizens of Kiev. For 73 days the valiant soldiers and workers were beating off numerous attacks by the fascists, holding out to the last.

Leningrad, the cradle of the October Revolution, stood as an impregnable fortress in the way of the enemy. Communists were the soul of the defence. In the first 3 months of the war alone, three-quarters of the Leningrad Party organisation went to the front. When the Nazi forces had reached the approaches to the city, veteran workers from the famous Putilov (Kirov) Works wrote an appeal to the soldiers: "Remember that there is no force in the world which could make us, Putilov workers, lose courage; we smelt steel and we are as hard as steel. We fought with the Czar and the capitalists—and we crushed them, we fought against the White Generals and the interventionists—and we crushed them, we fought against devastation and hunger—and we defeated them too. Surely our working hands have not grown weak, surely we have not forgotten our heroic past? No, we have never been as powerful as we are now, in strength and hatred of the enemy... He who despises death, who knows no fear, who moves forward under fire without stopping, will win the victory."²

¹ *The Soviet Union During the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945*, Moscow, 1976, p. 698 (in Russian).

² *The Guards of the Rear*, Moscow, 1962, p. 178 (in Russian).

In Leningrad the whole population rose in defence of their city. The battle line came close to such giants of Leningrad industry as the Kirov Works, the Electrosila and the Izhora factory in Kolpino. Their heroic workers did not stop production for a single day. During the 900 days of the savage blockade the workers of Leningrad, together with the troops, defended the cradle of the revolution.

Workers displayed exceptional heroism and self-sacrifice in the defence of Odessa and Sevastopol. Thanks to the stubborn defence of these and other cities which stood in the path of the fascist hordes, it was possible to gain time to mobilise and deploy the Red Army troops, evacuate industrial plant and machinery and other valuable items to distant parts of the country, and to destroy the fascist hopes for a lightning victory.

The battle for Moscow proved a turning point in the course of the war. "No matter how hard the rabid fascist hordes try it on the approaches to Moscow, they will never see Moscow! Fascism will find its grave on the approaches to Moscow. Everyone in support of the front!"—that the steel workers of the Hammer and Sickle Works announced on 20 October 1941. These words became a vow for all the workers of Moscow.

Tens of thousands of workers joined the ranks of the fighting men defending the capital. Communist workers' battalions and worker's militia were formed in the districts and factories. Thousands of workers went to fight in guerilla units, took part in local anti-aircraft defence and worked on the construction of fortifications.

Although more than 200 factories were evacuated from Moscow and only one-sixth of the workers remained, the capital was an important military arsenal. The whole country came to its assistance. Siberian divisions moved to Moscow, with great numbers of workers from the major industrial centres of the East in their ranks. Over a thousand artillery pieces were sent to Moscow by air from the already besieged Leningrad. On 28 November 1941, General Zhukov, Commander of the Western Front, telegraphed to A.A. Zhdanov, Secretary of the Leningrad City and Region Party Committee and one of the organisers of the defence of Leningrad: "We are grateful to the citizens of Leningrad for their assistance to Moscow in the struggle with the bloodthirsty Hitlerites."

The workers of Tula, who in those days were the southern bastion in the defence line of the capital, fought with an iron resolve. The Tula workers' regiment had to be reinforced 6 times during the 45 day siege of the city, but it never once abandoned its positions.¹

During the battle for Moscow the strategic initiative was wrested

¹ See *Izvestia*, 8 December 1976.

from the hands of the enemy. As a result of fierce fighting the enemy was defeated and thrown back from the Soviet capital. The "Blitzkrieg" strategy which had won victory in the West proved ineffectual in the struggle against the socialist state. The crushing defeat of the German fascist army destroyed the myth about the invincibility of fascist Germany and started a radical turn in the course of the entire war.

The nationwide fight against the invaders grew in the occupied parts of Soviet territory. Factory and office workers formed the main corps of the underground resistance groups in the towns. Workers displayed mass heroism in guerilla units in the Baltic region, the Leningrad and Pskov regions, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the Moscow region. Workers from the Kirov and Izhora factories fought in guerilla units in the Leningrad region.

Towards the end of 1943 over a million armed guerillas were fighting against the fascist invaders. Factory workers made up 30.1 per cent of these forces, farmers 40.5 per cent and office workers 29.4 per cent.

The occupation forces tried to get the workers on the captured territories to restore industrial enterprises and set them to work. Yet despite the most brutal terror Soviet people disrupted the measures taken by the occupation forces, evaded labour conscription and adopted diverse forms of sabotage. No small numbers of workers were shot for refusing to work for the occupying forces. The delegate to the 8th Extraordinary Congress of the Soviets and the nationally known innovator steel worker M. Mazai, the deputies to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet steel workers N. Puzyryov and I. Moiseev, and the leading Donbass coal miner N. Gvozdyrkov were among these who died at the hands of the fascist butchers. Soviet patriots gave invaluable help to the Red Army through heroic struggle in the rear of the enemy.

In the summer of 1942, the Germans began a fresh offensive on the southern flank of the front. They were trying to push through to Stalingrad, an important city on the Volga, and to the North Caucasus. It was essential to hold onto Stalingrad at any price. The battle of Stalingrad became a symbol of the courage of the Soviet soldiers, an inspiring example for all anti-fascist fighters.

Alongside soldiers of General Chuikov's 62nd army and General Shumilov's 64th army the workers of Stalingrad were defending their city. Extermination battalions drawn from workers at the Red October, Barricades and Tractor factories set an unparalleled example of steadfast courage. On 5 October 1942, *Pravda* wrote: "The

¹ *History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1965, p. 256 (in Russian).

names of the workers of the Stalingrad Tractor factory... who barred the enemy's entry to the city with their life and with their blood, will never fade from the hearts of the Soviet people."

In its efforts to break the resistance of the defenders of Stalingrad the enemy attacked the city with tens of thousands of bombs and shells and moved up hundreds of tanks and a large number of soldiers. Inside the city the battle was fought over every metre of land, every stairway, every floor of a building, every basement cellar and every shell crater. The world followed the course of battle with bated breath. On 27 November 1942 the *New York Tribune* wrote that amid the unimaginable chaos of raging fires, dense smoke, exploding bombs, damaged buildings and dead bodies, the defenders of the city held it against the enemy with passionate determination not only to die if required, not only to defend themselves where necessary but also to advance where possible.... Battles of this kind, wrote the paper, are beyond strategic calculation: they are conducted with a fierce hatred, with a passion which even London in the worst days of the German air raids did not know, but it is through such battles that the war is won.

The whole of the Soviet Union helped the soldiers and workers on the Volga. The valour displayed by the defenders of Stalingrad merged with the patriotism shown by workers in the rear. The workers of Moscow, the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia made their own contribution to the great victory on the Volga.

The gigantic battle of Stalingrad ended in the encirclement and defeat of a 330,000-strong German army group by Soviet forces of the South-Western, Stalingrad and Don Fronts under Generals N.F. Vatutin, A.I. Yeremenko and K.K. Rokossovsky. This victory was of tremendous importance in effecting a radical change in the course of the Second World War. It greatly enhanced the prestige of the USSR as a decisive force in the struggle for the liberation of peoples enslaved by fascism, strengthened the anti-Hitler coalition, and gave fresh impetus to the Resistance movement in the Nazi-occupied countries.

The great victory on the Volga aroused feelings of profound respect for the Soviet people and its army among people in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. At the Three-Power Conference in Teheran, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill presented the Soviet delegation with a ceremonial sword, a gift from King George VI to the citizens of Stalingrad in recognition of their victory over the fascist invaders. In May 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt sent a scroll to the heroic town on the Volga, in which he said: "I present this scroll to the city of Stalingrad to commemorate our admiration for its gallant defenders whose courage, fortitude, and devotion during the siege of September 13, 1942 to January 31, 1943 will inspire for-

ever the hearts of all free people. Their glorious victory stemmed the tide of invasion and marked the turning point in the war of the Allied Nations against the forces of aggression."¹

The voices of progressive scientists, writers and artists spoke out clearly. Albert Einstein said that the Red Army and the Red Navy courageously defended the wonderful achievements of Soviet culture and industry and destroyed a deadly threat to the future human progress.

Once the Red Army had gone onto the counter-offensive at Stalin-grad, the mass expulsion of German fascist troops from Soviet territory was begun. From this time on, the Red Army firmly kept the initiative in its hands. In the summer of 1943, the nazis moved considerable reserves from the West and re-armed the Wehrmacht with new tanks and self-propelled guns. However, troops of the Western, Bryansk, Central and Voronezh Fronts under the command of Generals V.D. Sokolovsky, M.M. Popov, K.K. Rokossovsky and N.F. Vatutin quickly checked their offensive at Orel and Kursk and went onto the counter-offensive. One after another the German powerful defence lines were wiped out. Hitler's plans to dig in along the Dnieper River also met with failure.

A vivid example of the patriotic initiative shown by the Soviet working class in providing every kind of assistance to the front was evident in the formation of workers' voluntary military units. In the summer of 1942, when the fascists were pushing through to Stalin-grad and the Caucasus, people in the Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo and Krasnoyarsk regions began to recruit a Special Siberian Infantry Corps. Many factories in Siberia helped to equip it. A campaign of emulation which developed at the beginning of 1943 in the Urals to produce extra equipment for Red Army units gave rise to a movement to establish a large tank formation through their own efforts. 130,000 working people in the Sverdlovsk, Perm and Chelyabinsk regions of the Urals applied to join its ranks. They formed a Special Ural Volunteer Tank Corps to which they had contributed over 70 million roubles out of their own savings. The Corps fought with glory from Orel to Berlin and Prague and was awarded the Orders of the Red Banner, of Suvorov and of Kutuzov, while its brigades and units were awarded 51 military orders.

The crushing blows at the Volga and the Kursk Bulge completely stunned the fascist bloc and made an impact on the international situation. Italy capitulated. Germany's other allies started to look for a way out of the war. The events on the Soviet-German front had a sobering effect on the Japanese military and the ruling circles in

¹ *Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the Presidents of the U.S.A. and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 294.

Turkey which nourished aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union.

Large-scale operations undertaken by the Soviet armed forces at Leningrad, in the Right Bank Ukraine, in Byelorussia, the Baltic region and in the north of the country had major results and made 1944 a memorable year. Towards the end of the year Hitler's troops were thrown out of the Soviet Union.

Now the Red Army faced the task of liberating the peoples of Europe and giving them every assistance in restoring their national independence and sovereignty.

The Berlin operation carried out by the 1st and 2nd Byelorussian and the 1st Ukrainian Fronts under the command of Marshals G.K. Zhukov, K.K. Rokossovsky and I.S. Konev was the final act in the struggle with fascist Germany. The enemy was routed and capitulated unconditionally. The Red Flag which was hoisted by Soviet troops above the Reichstag became a symbol of the victory of socialism over fascism. Hitler's New Order, which made the most monstrous crimes in the past fade into insignificance, was destroyed for ever. German fascism which had hoped to achieve world dominance was utterly defeated.

The flames of war in Europe were extinguished and yet the Second World War was not yet over. On 8 August 1945 the Soviet Union, fulfilling its undertaking to its Allies, declared war on militarist Japan. Soviet forces, whose commander-in-chief in the Far East was Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky, inflicted a crushing blow on the Kwantung army, which decided Japan's early capitulation. The Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War and with it the Second World War came to an end. The nations celebrated their great victory over the forces of fascism and militarism. All honourable people throughout the world expressed their profound respect for the Soviet people and its Army which had made a decisive contribution to the defeat of fascist Germany and militarist Japan.

The Soviet people's struggle received acclaim in speeches by many foreign political and military leaders.¹ For example, President Roosevelt stressed that "the Red Army and the Russian people have surely started the Hitler forces on the road to ultimate defeat and have earned the lasting admiration of the people of the United States".² US Chief of Staff General George Marshall admitted in his report to the Secretary of Defense that without the successful actions by the Red Army, American forces would not have been able to withstand the aggressor and war would have been transferred to the American

¹ See V. A. Sekistov, G. I. Korotkov, *American Voices*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian).

² *Correspondence...*, p. 58.

continent.¹ British Prime Minister Winston Churchill commented: "Future generations will acknowledge their debt to the Red Army as unreservedly as do we who have lived to witness these proud achievements."²

The President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, Charles de Gaulle, observed that "the enormous efforts devoted to the common struggle whether on the field of battle or through their work in the rear by millions and millions of men and women in the Soviet Union, the unbelievable sacrifices which they have made, the capability shown by those who lead them, ... have so deeply affected our people in their distress of yesterday and in their joy of today that they have increased to the highest point the long-standing affection that we, French people, have always felt for the Russian people".³

The Red Army defeated fascist Germany's main forces. During the first two years of the war between 153 and 200 enemy divisions were concentrated on the Soviet-German front (70 to 72 per cent of its total armed forces), in the third year 66 per cent and in the last year of the war 57 per cent of its divisions were deployed against the Soviet Union. In 1944, between 18 and 25 per cent of German divisions were on the Western front.⁴

During the war 506 German divisions on the Soviet-German front were destroyed, captured or disbanded due to heavy losses. Moreover, no fewer than 100 divisions of Germany's satellites were defeated. The Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition destroyed and captured 176 enemy divisions in North Africa, Italy and Western Europe. Out of a total of 13,600,000 German soldiers killed, wounded or captured 10,000,000 were on the Soviet-German front.⁵ The Wehrmacht losses on the Soviet-German front were four times those in the West European and Mediterranean theatres of war combined. With regard to the killed and wounded, this ratio was 6 : 1.⁶ Of the 100,000 aircraft produced in Germany during the war, 62,000 were destroyed by the Soviet Armed Forces.⁷

The great liberating mission undertaken by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces was in conformity with the nature of the Soviet social system, Marxist-Leninist ideology and the country's interna-

¹ Quoted from: *Fifty Years of the Soviet Armed Forces*, Moscow, 1968, p. 455 (in Russian).

² *Correspondence...*, pp. 305-306.

³ Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages. Pendant la guerre, juin 1940-janvier 1946*, Vol. 1, Paris, 1970, p. 489.

⁴ *The Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War 1941-1945. A Short History*, Moscow, 1970, p. 566 (in Russian).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 567.

⁶ *Voyenno-istorichesky zhurnal*, No. 12, 1962, pp. 73, 76.

⁷ *Voprosy istorii*, No. 10, 1961, p. 172.

tional commitment. The heroic army of the world's first socialist state saved the peoples of Europe from fascist enslavement and the peoples of Asia from the yoke of Japanese imperialism. More than 7 million Soviet soldiers took part in the armed struggle to liberate foreign countries. Over a million of them fell on the field of battle.¹

Communists were in the vanguard of the fight. The Party founded by Lenin was justly called a fighting party. By the beginning of 1945, almost 60 per cent of the Party membership were in the Red Army and the Red Navy.² Over 3 million Communists fell in the fight for freedom and independence of the nation and the liberation of enslaved peoples.³

The working class and all Soviet people, whether soldiers or workers in the rear, displayed great spirit, a loyalty to duty and a readiness to self-sacrifice during the Great Patriotic War.

HEROIC WORK FOR VICTORY

The use of occupied Europe's economic potential and the capture of major industrial areas of the Soviet Union in the early days created certain advantages for fascist Germany. Later on, however, Soviet society's greater ability to mobilise all resources for military and economic victory over the invaders made a growing impact on the balance of the economic capacities of the Soviet Union and Germany. The Communist Party's slogan "All for the Front, All for Victory!" became a powerful mobilising and organising force in the rear during the war years. Fighting in the battle front and the war effort in the rear equally served a single aim, the defeat of the enemy.

From the very first days of the war the working class moved into the vanguard of the patriotic movement to help the front. At the Moscow Motor Works workers declared: "We know that our cause is just, that the enemy will be defeated and that victory will be ours. In order to achieve this victory each one of us will work with full awareness of his duty as a citizen of the Soviet land and sparing no effort in order to forge our Homeland's military might... We are ready at any moment to change our tools for rifles."⁴

Millions of factory and office workers declared their willingness to work as much as was needed in order to meet the needs of the front. A resolution adopted by work teams at the Urals Engineering Works said: "Not a single worker, not a single engineer or technician, not a single office worker will leave the factory until such time as completion of the state assignment has been ensured." The workers

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 512.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Soviet Military Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1977, p. 280 (in Russian).

⁴ *Pravda*, 24 June 1941.

of the Red Proletarian Factory announced: "We consider ourselves to be mobilised and will not leave our work-place until such time as any task has been completed." Proceeding from this initiative, supported by the trade unions, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet enacted legislation which established mandatory overtime and abolished regular and extra holidays.

The Communist Party directed the efforts of the working class and the entire nation towards switching the national economy to the war footing. On 16 August 1941, the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government endorsed the military economic plan for the fourth quarter of 1941 and for 1942 for the Volga region, the Urals, West Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The plan had been drawn up by a special commission headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet government, N.A. Voznesensky. The new plan provided for widescale industrial construction in the eastern parts of the country, the relocation there of factories from the front-line areas and their accelerated commissioning, the development in these areas of the main military and economic base for the Soviet Union, the expanded production of arms, ammunition, tanks, aircraft, metal, coal and petrol, and an extension of the network of principal railway junctions, stations and routes.

On 24 June 1941, the Central Committee and the government laid down specific tasks for local Party, government and economic bodies regarding the evacuation of the population and production equipment from the front-line areas. This work was organised by the Council for Evacuation. Its members were the First Secretary of the Soviet trade unions, N.M. Shvernik (chairman), the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet government A.N. Kosygin, the Minister of the Chemical Industry M.G. Pervukhin, the Deputy Chairman of the government and Minister of Foreign Trade A.I. Mikoyan, the representative of the Soviet State Planning Committee M.Z. Saburov, etc.

The industrial centres of Byelorussia and the Ukraine did not stop production until the very last minute. Equipment from the Zaporozhye Steel Works, from the coking and the refractory plants and the Dneprospetsstal Steel Works were shipped off to the east literally from the front-line. Skilled workers from the Donetsk, Makeevka, Yenakievo and Alchevsk iron and steel factories in Donbass provided great assistance in evacuating these factories. With heavy hearts Soviet people destroyed and rendered useless anything that could not be taken away.

Day and night two flows travelled along the railways: convoys with troops and military equipment went towards the front while freight trains with equipment from evacuated factories went towards the rear from the front-line areas. Between July and December 1941,

2,593 factories, including 1,523 major enterprises, were relocated from the threatened areas to the east. 1,500,000 railway cars were needed to do the job.¹ Over 10 million Soviet people were evacuated to the deep rear. In scale and importance for the fate of the nation and the outcome of the war this unprecedented epic feat was equivalent to the major battles of the Second World War.

In the autumn of 1941 the economy was in a difficult situation. Not a single iron and steel works was in operation in the south of the country, the Donbass coal region had been captured and the Moscow region coal mines put out of action. Between June and December the gross industrial production in the Soviet Union fell by 2.1 times. Many of the evacuated factories had their equipment still en route. In the Urals, in Siberia and in the Volga region conditions were minimal for accepting the evacuated factories, locating them, bringing them into operation and rapidly starting up military production. There was a severe shortage of skilled workforce, of building materials and housing.

However, the efforts of the Party and the government, the dedicated work of the people overcame these incredible difficulties.

Military production developed at an accelerated pace. On the decision of the State Defence Committee of October 1941, a combine for the production of KV heavy tanks was set up incorporating the Kirov factory in Chelyabinsk, tank sections of the Izhora factory (evacuated to the Urals and set up at Uralmash engineering plant) and a number of heavy engineering factories in the Urals. In the course of 4 months, from September to December, the tremendous work of setting up tank production in the eastern part of the country was completed. 8 tank assembly works, 6 armour buildings and 3 diesel factories went into operation.

Uralmash, which before the war had been producing highly sophisticated machines on special orders, switched over to the production of heavy tank armour. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant and the Red Sormovo Factory in Gorky began to produce tanks. With the loss of factories in the Southern Ukraine and the Donbass, producers of high-quality iron and steel, the Urals and Siberia had an extremely important task of filling the gap in a short space of time to provide for the armour production. Workers at the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk Combines, the leading enterprises in the Urals and Siberia, took on this task.

At Magnitogorsk there were no special furnaces in which to smelt steel for armour. A new technology was devised for smelting steel in large open-hearth furnaces. Since there were no rolling mills they started to roll armour steel in the rougher of a blooming mill. On

¹ *The Soviet Union During the Great Patriotic War...*, p. 101.

28 July 1941 the first armour plate was produced. Such experiments had never previously been known in world practice. The Kuznetsk metalworkers quickly developed and mastered the technology for producing special steel and rolling it in an ordinary railmill. Foremen A. N. Tomilin and P. D. Nikitin and the smelters M. V. Burkat-sky, A. Ya. Chalkov, I. T. Popov and others achieved record output of new types of steel. Steelworkers in the town of Zlatoust mastered the smelting of 78 new types of steel in the first 6 months of the war alone, while at the Serov Iron and Steel Works they mastered the production of 50 new types. The new iron and steel industry in the East was gathering pace and this was immediately felt at the front.

The speedy evacuation of industry and the rapid pace at which it was started up again in the new areas had a positive effect on the development of the country's war economy. In March 1942 industry in the eastern part of the country already produced as much military output as the whole country did before the war. Towards the end of the first half of 1942, 1,200 evacuated factories were operating in the eastern areas.

This was a great accomplishment of the working class. The well-known British journalist Alexander Werth who during the war spoke with workers evacuated to the Urals and Siberia wrote: "This transplantation of industry in the second half of 1941 and the beginning of 1942 and its 'rehousing' in the east, must rank among the most stupendous organisational and human achievements of the Soviet Union during the war... The story of how whole industries and millions of people had been moved to the east, of how industries were set up in a minimum of time, in appallingly difficult conditions, and of how these industries managed to increase production to an enormous extent during 1942, was, above all, a story of incredible human endurance. In most places, living conditions were fearful, in many places food was very short, too. People worked because they knew that it was absolutely necessary—they worked twelve, thirteen, sometimes fourteen or fifteen hours a day; they 'lived on their nerves'; they knew that never was their work more urgently needed than now."¹

The mobilisation of manpower resources was one of the most complex problems which had to be solved in the very first weeks of the war. The need to build up a sufficiently large army caused sharp reduction in the work force in the rear. The situation was made even more difficult because the size of the country's population was considerably reduced by the fascist occupation of the western areas. 88 million people, 45 per cent of the Soviet population, lived in

¹ Alexander Werth, *Russia at War 1941-1945*, New York, 1966, pp. 214, 218.

these areas before the war, with about 12 million employed in the national economy, including over 4 million industrial workers.¹ By the end of 1942 the country's population had fallen by 60 million (130 million compared to 191,700,000 in 1940).² In the same year the number of workers amounted to 18,400,000 compared to 31,200,000 in 1940³ (less than in 1931).

The war effort necessitated a restructuring of industry, readjustment of plant for military needs, establishment of new links between factories and redeployment of workers among different sectors and economic regions. The training and retraining of work force to meet the needs of military production and the supply of skilled workers to factories in the eastern part of the country which bore the main burden of military production became extremely urgent issues.

The task of creating a properly coordinated and rapidly expanding war economy demanded gigantic efforts from the working class. From the very beginning of the war millions from among collective farmers, office workers, housewives, old-age pensioners, students and other people in towns and villages volunteered to take the place of the skilled men gone off to the front. "Our fathers', husbands' and brothers' tools must not be idle for a single hour!"—this appeal could be heard everywhere. In their call published by the factory newspaper on 3 July 1941, women workers at the Moscow Machine-building Factory said: "The interests of defending the Homeland today demand that we women who work in the factory administration should return to our machines and to our skills and replace our husbands, fathers, brothers and sons who have gone off to the front. The machines must work and they will work."

The Communist Party developed organisational and educational work in order to draw Soviet women into active working life. In the second half of 1942 about 500,000 housewives entered production. In many sectors of industry women became a decisive force, providing examples of highly productive work. Between 1940 and 1942 the proportion of women in industry rose from 41 to 52 per cent, on the railways—from 25 to 36 per cent and in communications from 48 to 67 per cent.⁴

The slogan "All for the Front, All for Victory!" was taken up enthusiastically by Young Communist League members and all Soviet young people. In June and July 1941 alone, 150,000 students entered

¹ *Soviet Economy. Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1956, p. 192; *Collection of Reports by the Extraordinary State Commission on the Crimes of the German-Fascist Invaders*, Moscow, 1946, p. 429 (both in Russian).

² *Soviet Economy...*, p. 18; N. A. Voznesensky, *The Soviet War Economy During the Patriotic War*, Moscow, 1948, p. 26 (in Russian).

³ *Voprosi istorii*, No. 6, 1960, p. 29.

⁴ N. A. Voznesensky, op. cit., p. 111.

production¹, in the second half of 1941, 360,000 secondary school students did so and by the end of 1942 the proportion of teen-age workers under 18 reached 15 per cent compared with 6 per cent in 1939.²

Representatives of the old guard of the working class also returned to factory workplaces. On the first day of the war 20 skilled workers on pension, coming to their old factory in Rostov-on-Don declared: "We fought against the German occupying forces in 1918. At this moment of great danger for our nation we cannot stand aside. We are returning to our machines in order to forge victory for our Red Army, Airforce and Navy".³ By the end of 1942 the number of workers aged 50 and over rose from 9 to 12 per cent.⁴

The influx of hundreds of thousands of citizens played an important role in providing skilled workers for industry, construction and transport in the extremely difficult conditions of the first months of the war. This did not, however, completely solve the problem of manpower resources. The government had to resort to a whole system of economic and administrative measures. Measures were taken to redeploy labour and basic production facilities towards the defence industry. The lengthening of the working day and the abolition of regular holidays made it possible to increase the utilisation of production capacities by approximately one-third in the early stages of the war. Workers were transferred to defence industry on a mass scale. Part of the skilled workforce were exempted from military service.

The Soviet state was obliged to resort to the exceptional measure of mobilising the population of working age on a nationwide scale. A decree passed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 13 February 1942 announced the mobilisation of the entire urban population of working age for work in their place of residence in production and construction, primarily in the aircraft, tank, munitions, iron and steel, chemical and fuel industries. This decree was soon extended to the rural population of working age as well.

Altogether, between 1942 and 1945, the Government's Manpower Committee mobilised nearly 12 million people, including 3,010,400 for permanent work in industry, construction and transport, 2,121,400 for job training centres, and 6,751,200 people for seasonal work.⁵

In view of the great changes in the composition of the industrial

¹ *The YCL: Facts and Figures*, Moscow, 1949, p. 53 (in Russian).

² N. A. Voznesensky, op. cit., p. 112.

³ *Trud*, 3 July 1941.

⁴ N. A. Voznesensky, op. cit., p. 113.

⁵ A. V. Mitrofanova, *The Soviet Working Class During the Great Patriotic War*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 427, 428 (in Russian).

labour force, wide-scale training of new recruits to industry and advanced training for existing workers was organised.

In the early stages of the war, when the work force was being renewed exceptionally rapidly, the main task was to look for a form of technical training which would enable the workers as quickly as possible to master a necessary minimum of skills and start producing goods. This was the individual and team training directly at the workplace.

During the first months of the war a foreman from one of the Tomsk factories, A.S. Eliseyev, and a turner from Uralmash, P.K. Spekhov, each trained 30 new workers.¹ Their initiative was taken up widely at factories and construction sites. With the help of skilled workers, returned pensioners, foremen and engineering and technical staff, the new recruits learned their skills on the production line and quickly got down to work. A great deal was done at the Red Sormovo Factory. In October 1943 the factory Party Committee held a conference of 950 workers of the older generation on this subject. In his greetings to the participants in the conference, M.I. Kalinin wrote: "Dear comrades, upon you rests the moral and national duty to preserve the old traditions of the Red Sormovo workers and to teach new recruits to work as skillfully as the old cadres have always done."²

Between 1941 and 1945, on average 2,261,000 new workers were trained every year while 1,851,000 improved their qualifications. Thus more than 11,300,000 new workers were trained and over 9,200,000 people increased their skills.³

The state labour reserve system set up in 1940 was extremely important in training skilled workers. During the war 2,475,000 people were trained at the training centres, as many as had been trained at factory training schools during the 20 years of peace.

The rapid incorporation of new social strata into the working class during wartime was possible due to Soviet society's vast capacity for mobilisation, the homogeneity of its social and economic foundations and the ideological and political unity of the Soviet people.

Soviet patriotism gave rise to various forms of concrete help by workers in the rear to front-line soldiers. A nationwide fund raising campaign developed to help the war effort. People made contributions to build whole columns of tanks, squadrons of aircraft and other military technology. One form of mass participation in this move-

¹ *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 14 November 1941; *Trud*, 28 April 1942.

² *Pravda*, 31 October 1943.

³ *Soviet Power's Forty Years of Achievement in Figures. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1957, p. 264 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

ment was the organisation of extra working days, a movement that spread across the country.

Another campaign was to supply servicemen with warm clothes, etc., as a personal initiative. Goods waggons full of presents set off for the front, accompanied by delegations from republics, regions and individual factories. From the very first days of the war care of the wounded became a nationwide concern. People in towns and villages throughout the country patronised hospitals and did voluntary work to help them.

The patriotic upsurge and creative initiative shown by the working class also took the form of a mass movement for combining different skills, for multi-lathe operation, extra shifts worked under the slogan "All for the Front", etc. The whole country came to know the names of outstanding production workers.

The Youth Teams headed by M.F. Popov in Uralmash and by V.F. Shubin at the Gorky Motor Works were the first in the country to receive the title of Front-Line Teams for achieving high levels of productivity. Members of Front-Line Teams undertook to at least double their production targets. In February 1942 D.F. Bosy, a milling machine operator in Nizhni Tagil fulfilled his shift quota by 1,480 per cent with the help of a device which he had invented. He thereby set off a movement which came to be known as the Thousand Percenters.

By the middle of 1942 the economy had been switched over to a war footing. Overcoming difficulties, it gradually picked up tempo and laid the foundations for ensuring material and technical superiority over fascist Germany. In 1942, 25,436 aircraft, 24,446 tanks and over 33,000 artillery pieces were delivered to the front. During this same period fascist Germany produced 14,700 aircraft, 9,300 tanks and 12,000 guns.¹

In the course of a year the Red Army's tank and aircraft capacity was restored and Soviet artillery became significantly stronger. When the battle of Stalingrad began the Red Army had completed its technical re-equipment. For many indicators its military might was now superior to the Wehrmacht machinery and armament.

In the turning-point year of 1943 the Soviet working class achieved outstanding success in further strengthening the nation's military might.

From 1943 on, priority was given to improving the quality of factory production and increasing labour productivity. Industry was being re-equipped with advanced machinery, technological processes were perfected and energy inputs per worker were increased. In-line production methods, rapid smelting and multi-lathe

¹ *History of the Second World War...*, Vol. 5, pp. 36-53.

operation were widely brought into use. Leading workers were setting new records in production. The flow of rationalisation proposals increased. A number of leading factories took the initiative to extend the All-Union Socialist Emulation Movement to expand supplies to the front, mobilise internal resources, introduce a system of rationalisation, and reduce the costs of production.

As a result of the movement "fewer workers, more output" which developed widely in 1943, and as a result of switching over to in-line production, factories were able to fulfill their production programmes with a significant reduction in the number of workers employed.

Labour productivity increased in 1943 over the previous year on average by 7 per cent in industry and by 13 per cent in the defence industry, while the number of workers rose by 6 per cent. The steady improvement in technology and the introduction of new production methods made it possible in a single year to increase the production of ammunition 4-fold while the number of workers increased by only 22.8 per cent.¹

On 1 May 1943, on the initiative of Kuibyshev factories socialist emulation to set up a Supreme Command Fund was started. Emulation developed between different categories of workers. Front-line shifts were worked and public reviews of the organisation of work were conducted. In the summer of 1943 workers at the Pervouralsk Pipe Factory organised the first public review of work, as a result of which additional resources were discovered for increasing productivity and expanding output. This initiative was widely taken up in other branches of industry. The movement of youth teams for overfulfilling plans and for achieving high results with a small number of workers acquired great importance. By October 1943 there were 36,000 youth teams while in 1945 their number reached 155,000 covering more than 1 million young workers.² They undertook to overfulfill plans, save raw materials and fuel, and raise the skill of each team member. In November 1943 members of E. G. Baryshnikova's Youth Team at the First Ball-Bearing Factory halved the size of the team and produced 4 times their production target. By April of the following year 13,000 youth teams had adopted this method of work and thus released tens of thousands of workers for other jobs.

In 1943 a significant increase in military production was achieved. Gross output in the defence industry increased by 2.2 times.³ The

¹ *Trud*, 22 November 1944. Compared to 1940, labour productivity was 130 per cent in 1942, 139 per cent in 1943, and 142 per cent in 1944 (*History of the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. 6, p. 74).

² *Pravda*, 24 January 1944; *Molodoi Bolshevik*, No. 11, 1948, pp. 40-41

³ A. N. Kosygin, "United in the Defence of the Homeland", *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1980, p. 49.

amount of tanks produced made it possible to form armoured and mechanised corps necessary for the major operations on the Volga and in the battle of Kursk. Tank production was centred at such giant factories as Factory No. 183, the Kirov Factory in Chelyabinsk, the Urals Heavy Engineering Factory and Red Sormovo. The Soviet Union's tank technology was superior to the best foreign models.

The achievements of Soviet aircraft industry made it possible for Soviet Airforce to acquire air superiority in the summer of 1943. 25 new types of aircraft (including modifications) and 23 new types of engines for them were put into serial production during the war.¹

As the German General Jodl admitted in November 1943, a decisive factor for Germany was that "as a result of our invasion of the endless space of Russian territory we discovered that the enemy possessed not only enormous human resources but also a technical level of military industry which obliged us to conduct total warfare and to multiply our efforts in the field of military industry."²

The advantages of the socialist economic system had a telling effect in the successes of Soviet defence industry and the entire war economy. The Soviet working class led by the Communist Party gave an example of rapid and comprehensive mobilisation of its forces to restructure the economy for military needs. In 1945 the number of workers employed in the Soviet economy reached 27,300,000 of whom 9,500,000 worked in industry,³ which represented 87.5 per cent and 86.4 per cent respectively of the 1940 level.

The production experience opened the way towards the fullest use of the potential for an increase in productivity. Organisational measures became very important. The foreman of a tank building team E. P. Agarkov and his colleague in an armaments team A. Fedotov suggested streamlining the structure of management by eliminating certain intermediary links, increasing the role of the shop foremen, improving the management of certain sections and releasing skilled workers and team leaders, which all combined would increase labour productivity. This initiative was taken up in many factories in the aircraft, armaments, munitions, iron and steel, medium engineering and other industries. In 1944 and 1945 tens of thousands of workers, engineers and technicians were released to work in new factories.

In the final stages of the war the eastern parts remained the main base of the country's war industry. Between 1942 and 1944, 2,250 major industrial enterprises were commissioned in these areas.⁴

¹ *History of the Communist Party...*, Vol. 5, Book 1, pp. 459-60, 464.

² *Voyenno-istorichesky zhurnal*, No. 10, 1960, p. 81.

³ *Soviet Economy*, p. 190.

⁴ *History of the Communist Party...*, Vol. 5, Book 1, p. 502.

The volume of industrial output increased by 3.6 times in the Urals, 2.8 times in Siberia, and 2.4 times in the Volga region.¹

Agriculture faced a difficult situation during the war. In 1943 the sown area was only 63 per cent of the pre-war level, and the number of cattle was 62 per cent.² Nevertheless, despite the extremely difficult conditions, the farmers successfully tackled the task of providing the country with food and raw materials.

While the war was in progress restoration of the ruined economy on the territory liberated from the enemy began. The Party and the government paid great attention to rehabilitating the Donbass coal production and the iron and steel industry in the south of the country. The Central Trade Union Council suggested that trade union organisations at operating industrial enterprises should sponsor the restoration of coal mines and factories in Donbass and help reconstruct cultural, sport and social amenities in the area. The YCL also set up its sponsorship of the coalfield. More than 70 Leningrad factories took part in the technical re-equipment of factories and mines in Donbass. There is a memorial tablet in the turbine room in the Donetsk Iron and Steel Works which reads: "This 5,000 kw turbo-generator was made in Leningrad during the blockade." 37 industrial enterprises in Moscow gave help to factories and mines in Donbass, the Dnieper area and in Krivoi Rog Region. Workers from 57 factories in various Soviet republics took part in restoring the Zaporozhye Steel Works.

During their retreat the fascists mined Smolyanka mine of Kuibyshevugol and blew up the main shaft completely sealing it. Despite the risk of roof falls people worked round the clock and cleared an entry to the mine metre by metre. On the third day, access to the mine was opened. The dynamite team brought up more than 300 kg of dynamite. Working in freezing water up to their waist, volunteer miners raised machinery from the flooded area.

A remarkable patriotic movement of voluntary teams was born in the course of restoring devastated cities. It was started in June 1943 in Stalingrad on the initiative of A. M. Cherkasova. During their spare time thousands of citizens worked voluntarily in clearing the ruins and restoring factories, schools and hospitals. Supporters of Cherkasova's movement appeared in all the liberated towns.

Already in wartime, despite the tremendous losses, sacrifices and hardships, Soviet people achieved successes in rebuilding towns and villages, industry, transport and agriculture. 7,500 major industrial enterprises, about 51,000 kilometres of railways, over 1,800 state farms, 3,000 machine and tractor stations, 85,000 collec-

¹ A. N. Kosygin, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

² *History of the Communist Party...*, Vol. 5, Book 1, p. 465.

tive farms, about 6,000 hospitals, and over 70,000 schools were restored.¹ 17,900,000 sq. m. of living space were built and repaired in invasion-devastated towns and 1,400,000 houses built in rural areas. In the liberated areas industrial production in 1945 reached about one-third of its 1940 level while gross agricultural output was 51 per cent of the 1940 level.²

Industry, the core of the war economy, generated new capacities both through the rehabilitation of the liberated areas and through tremendous capital construction. If military output is calculated in terms of a million tons of steel produced, then during the war the Soviet Union produced 3 times more tank machinery than Germany, 3.8 times more than Britain and 6.3 times more than the United States; similarly, 2.6 times more aircraft than Germany, 3.2 times more than the United States, and 1.5 times more than Britain.³

Throughout the war period the Soviet Union produced 489,900 guns, 102,500 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 136,844 aircraft.⁴

During the war the Soviet Union received 9,600 guns, 11,567 tanks and self-propelled guns and 18,753 aircraft on lend-lease from the United States and Britain. Deliveries from the Allies accounted for less than 2 per cent of artillery, about 12 per cent of aircraft and 10 per cent of tanks out of the total quantity of armaments and machinery received by the Red Army in wartime.⁵ On 3 February 1945, US government spokesman Crawley admitted that his country's contribution in equipping Soviet forces was small in comparison with their overall requirements.⁶

In the very difficult wartime conditions the Soviet working class, of which a considerable number was in the army, tackled extremely difficult tasks in the war economy, steadily increasing production for the army in the field, improving production techniques, increasing the capacity of industrial enterprises, building new factories and plants, and ensuring the transport. Soviet workers, scientists and engineers created first-class equipment for their army, and forged the sword of victory which crushed the fascists.

¹ *50 Years of the Land of Soviets...*, p. 191.

² *The Pace of Five-Year Plans. Soviet Economic Development*, Moscow, 1968, p. 127 (in Russian).

³ *The Second World War. General Problems*, Book 1, Moscow, 1966, pp. 59, 63 (in Russian).

⁴ *History of the Great Patriotic War...*, Vol. 6, p. 48.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ I. A. Gladkov, *The Economic Victory of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War*, Moscow, 1970, p. 27 (in Russian).

LEADER OF THE PEOPLE'S ANTI-FASCIST COALITION

The victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War was a triumph for Leninist foreign policy. Soviet diplomacy made a bold appeal to the masses in tackling the most complex international problems.

Lenin once said: "We must... help the people to intervene in questions of war and peace."¹ This determined the main line of Soviet diplomatic efforts to secure the foreign policy conditions for victory over fascism.

The very first statements made by the Soviet government after Germany's attack on the Soviet Union contained a call to establish a broad anti-fascist front of the peoples. "The aim of this national patriotic war against the fascist oppressors," Stalin said in a speech broadcast on 3 July 1941, "is not only to remove the danger hanging over our country but also to help all the peoples of Europe. Our war for the freedom of our Homeland will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic freedoms. This will be a united front of peoples fighting for freedom and against enslavement and the threat of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies."²

Above all, the Soviet government sought the formation of an *anti-fascist coalition of countries*.

An Anglo-Soviet agreement for joint operations against Hitler Germany was signed on 12 July 1941. In July agreements were concluded with the Czechoslovakian and Polish governments in exile in London. On 27 September, the Soviet government officially recognised the National Committee of Free France and expressed its willingness to give comprehensive help and assistance to the French people in the joint struggle against fascist Germany and its allies. At the end of September and beginning of October 1941 a conference was held in Moscow between representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain which discussed questions regarding mutual military and economic assistance in the war.

A military and political alliance between the three countries was finally established in the first half of 1942. On 26 May 1942 an Anglo-Soviet Treaty was concluded in London on an alliance in the war against Hitler Germany and its allies in Europe and on post-war cooperation and mutual assistance. On 11 June a Soviet-American

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1972, p. 252.

² *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union During the Patriotic War. Documents and Materials (22. June 1941-31 December 1943)*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1946, p. 34 (in Russian).

Agreement on principles regarding mutual assistance and the conduct of war against aggression was signed in Washington. The Fighting France and patriotic forces of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and many other countries soon joined the anti-Hitler coalition.

This coalition played an important role in mobilising all anti-fascist forces. However, there were influential reactionary anti-Soviet circles in countries participating in the anti-fascist coalition who stubbornly opposed the active conduct of military operations against the fascist aggressors in the hope of placing the full burden of war on the shoulders of the Soviet people and, having thereby weakened the Soviet Union, of dictating to it their own conditions for a post-war settlement in the world. Senator Harry Truman, later President of the United States, expressed the point of view of these circles when he declared on 24 June 1941: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible."¹ While the Red Army was locked in a bitter fight against the main forces of the fascist bloc, the British and American governments used every excuse to delay effective support for the Soviet Union, both in arms supplies and in direct military operations.

In this connection the Soviet government directed its main effort to bringing the Western partners in the coalition to step up military operations against the fascist countries and above all to open a second front in Europe.

The Soviet Union pursued these aims through diplomatic means and by relying on a broad mass movement for opening a second front. Its appeal to the masses had also a wider implication. The movement to open a second front which drew the masses into the fight for a democratic foreign policy, put pressure on governments from below which they had to take into account and which to a considerable extent made it difficult for reactionaries to implement their foreign policy plans. At the Teheran Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill were forced to make a firm commitment to open a second front in May 1944.

The Soviet Union gave assistance to the popular anti-fascist liberation struggle and to the anti-fascist Resistance movement in Europe. The Soviet government helped to set up Polish, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, Romanian and French army units in the Soviet Union and to supply Czechoslovak, Polish, Yugoslav and Bulgarian patriots with weapons, ammunition and food. Foreign units set up with the help of the Soviet Union numbered 550,000 fighting men.

The national liberation armies in South-Eastern and Central Europe

¹ *The New York Times*, 24 June, 1941.

were supplied with 515,758 rifles and carbines, 176,465 sub-machine guns, 41,929 light and heavy machine guns, 12,689 anti-tank guns, 10,954 mortars and 6,474 artillery guns. An armoured corps and 2 armoured brigades of the Polish Army and a Yugoslav and a Czechoslovak armoured brigades were supplied with Soviet tanks. 1,146 aircraft were handed over to the fraternal armies.¹

Soviet citizens took part in the Resistance movement in Europe and helped to train guerilla commanders. According to conservative data, over 40,000 Soviet citizens took an active part in partisan formations and underground sabotage groups in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, Italy and other European countries.²

Particular note should be taken of the Soviet Union's political and diplomatic support for organisations which represented the anti-fascist liberation movement. The Soviet government supported popular power bodies set up in Yugoslavia during the war. In a statement of 14 December 1943 it welcomed the transformation of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of Yugoslav Peoples into a supreme legislative and executive body and stressed that this would assist the further successful struggle by the Yugoslav people against Hitler Germany. In 1943, the Soviet government not only recognised the reorganised French Committee of National Liberation but also persuaded the American and British governments to recognise it. On 12 December 1943 a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation was concluded between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union frustrated attempts by influential circles in Western countries to impose a London-based reactionary émigré government on the Polish people, and gave comprehensive assistance to strengthening the Polish Committee of National Liberation, the first genuinely democratic authority in Polish history. With the support of the Soviet Union, anti-fascist and liberation movements and the Resistance movement which drew their support directly from the masses took up their rightful place in the anti-fascist coalition.

The socialist country merits historic recognition for its success in putting an end to attempts by reactionary circles to impose imperialist plans for a post-war settlement in the world on the anti-fascist coalition. For example, at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1943 the British and American delegates put forward a scheme for setting up various federations in Central and South-East Europe which would restrict the sovereignty of states in this area. The Soviet delegation, however, firmly rejected this scheme. The Mos-

¹ *History of the Communist Party...*, Vol. 5, Book 1, pp. 573-74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 577.

cow Conference adopted a Four-Power Declaration on the question of international security which spoke of the need to set up a General International Organisation for the Maintenance of Peace and Security and put forward the idea of the sovereign equality of all states. The declaration of the Crimea Conference in February 1945 pointed to the need for "processes which will enable the liberated peoples ... to create democratic institutions of their own choice."¹

The Soviet Union adhered strictly and absolutely to these principles. The Red Army's advance across the territory of other European countries, liberating them from fascist slavery, put paid to the plans of reactionary circles in Britain and the United States to replace Hitlerite domination with their own and prevented attempts by domestic reactionaries to put a brake on democratic and revolutionary development. Favourable conditions were created for fundamental democratic and social reforms the need for which was already becoming evident in the pre-war period.

The Soviet Union put forward a broad programme of measures to achieve international peace and security and save future generations from the disaster of war. It was successful in getting the United States and Britain to adopt democratic principles for a post-war settlement. These principles were reflected most fully in the decisions of the Crimea and Potsdam Conferences.

In this way the democratic and internationalist character of Soviet foreign policy, determined by the organic unity of interests of socialist society on the one hand and the aims of national and social liberation of the peoples on the other, was strikingly evident in war-time.

A POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION

In the great battle against fascism the Soviet Union relied on support from the international working class and all anti-fascist and patriotic forces of the world.

In recalling this chronicle of the Soviet people's struggle against German fascism and Japanese militarism, special mention should be made of the help which the Mongolian People's Republic gave to the Soviet Union.

On 22 June 1941 a joint session of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Presidium of the Small Khural and the Council of Ministers adopted a declaration in which they assured the Soviet government that Mongolia would remain true to its commitments under the Treaty

¹ *The Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. Documents*, Moscow, 1969, p. 136.

of Friendship and Cooperation concluded on 12 March 1936 between the two countries. Throughout the war Mongolia gave a maximum amount of material assistance and moral support to the Soviet people.

The Mongolian working class showed its internationalist solidarity with the Soviet people first of all in the movement to increase labour productivity, expand industrial output and introduce new types of production. This movement was initiated by the miners of Nalaikha, one of the oldest sections of the working class, and they were supported by workers from the industrial combine in Ulan Bator, the Khatkhyl Fleece Factory and the State Printing Works. A socialist emulation movement was launched in all sectors of economy. Ts. Munkh-Ochir, a fitter at a vehicle depot in Ulan Bator, wrote: "During the war we fully understood that we should help our Russian comrades through our work. I worked 8 to 16 hours a day and fulfilled the plan and quarterly targets by 150-200 per cent and more. During the war I set about 10 youngsters to work and taught them the skill of a fitter."¹ Thanks to the dedicated work of the Mongolian working class, output at state-owned industrial enterprises had doubled in 1945 in comparison with 1940 and accounted for about a third of total sales. There was a significant increase in the size of the working class: between 1941 and 1945 the number of workers increased by almost 30 per cent.²

In an effort to free the Soviet Union from exporting a whole range of goods to Mongolia and to increase the export to the Soviet Union of wool, blankets, sheepskin jackets, felt, saddles, overcoats, felt footwear, etc., the Mongolian working class undertook to expand the production capacity of factories producing consumer goods. Special attention was paid to producing goods to meet Soviet requirements. The working class played an important role in collecting funds for assistance to the Red Army. At various meetings workers took pledges to contribute money, food and warm clothes to the aid fund. A considerable number of the gifts which Mongolia sent to the battle front were paid for by workers out of their personal savings and income. Throughout the war the Mongolian people collected gifts worth 65 million tugriks and sent them to the Red Army. Considerable amounts of money were contributed to the aid fund for restoring the economy in areas of the Soviet Union liberated from German occupation. The Revolutionary Mongolia tank column and the Mongolian Arat air squadron were set up from contributions of

¹ *The Great Patriotic War and the Mongolian People. Collection of Documents. 1941-1945*, Ulan Bator, 1970, p. 44 (in Mongolian).

² *History of the Mongolian People's Republic*, Moscow, 1967, p. 374 (in Russian).

money from workers and took part in battles against the fascist forces.¹

Many Mongolian citizens applied to be sent to the Soviet-German front to fight against fascism.

The working class also headed the nationwide movement to strengthen the country's defence capability and became a reserve for recruitment to the Mongolian armed forces.

Through their work the Mongolian working class and all working people brought nearer the Day of Victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism. Mongolian troops cooperated closely with the Trans-Baikal Red Army forces in military operations against the Japanese militarists. After a difficult passage across the Gobi Desert Mongolian soldiers carried out a heroic raid against the Lao Dun Peninsula. Thus, alongside the Soviet Union, the Mongolian People's Republic made its contribution to saving the peoples of Asia from the dangers of enslavement by the Japanese militarists.

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SOVIET VICTORY

In essence the Great Patriotic War was a fierce battle between two socio-economic systems, capitalism and socialism, and between two opposite world outlooks, the ideology of Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and the ideology of the most reactionary and militaristic forces of imperialism on the other. In its fight against the Soviet Union, German fascism pursued not only imperialist but also class, political and ideological objectives—the destruction of the Soviet state and the socialist social structure and the eradication of communist ideology. The war unleashed by fascism was the largest armed attack of the shock troops of world imperialism against socialism and one of the heaviest trials which this nation has ever had to endure.

The first country of victorious socialism embodied the highest achievements of social progress and the hopes of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples for future social and national liberation. Thus not only the fate of the socialist state but also of the international communist and working-class movement, the fate of social progress and democracy and the very national existence of many peoples, the fate of world civilisation were being decided in the course of the war. The question of the direction in which world history would develop in the future was being decided: whether it would develop along the lines of social progress or whether fascism which brought death and destruction to the peoples would plunge humanity into the dark shadows of the "new order".

¹ Ibid., pp. 375-76.

Soviet people honourably fulfilled their great mission of defending the achievements of socialism and saving world civilisation from fascist barbarity. This country became the main force barring the path of German fascism to world domination, it bore the main burden of war and played the decisive role in the defeat of Hitler Germany and later of militarist Japan.

Experience again showed that imperialism was not capable, no matter how savage the methods to which it resorted, to stop the progressive development of the world revolutionary process or to bar the people's path to social progress, peace and democracy.

Never before had there been such convincing proof that *socialism and peace are stronger than capitalism and war*.

In January 1945, Academician G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, a prominent leader of the Communist Party and Soviet state and one of Lenin's colleagues, wrote: "Where yesterday a desert zone should have been firmly established according to the enemy's evil plan, today the fresh shoots of renewed life are again pushing their way through.

"In the violent heat of the present war the values of the old world are being shattered before our very eyes and a new world is clearly emerging.

"The road to eliminating the sources of this worldwide suffering lies through innumerable misfortunes and the whole world is witness that our Homeland is at the head of this great liberation movement.

"And with what justice Lenin could say to us all with the usual crinkling of his sharp eyes and the joyful sparks in their penetrating depths: 'Now then comrades, was I not right in my main decisive stake on the gigantic powers of our wonderful people: we shall stand up, we shall endure, we shall destroy all obstacles and we shall win.'"¹

In his assessment of the results of the historic struggle of the new socialist world against the reactionary forces of imperialism, the outstanding leader of the international communist movement, Maurice Thorez, said: "The indisputable superiority of the socialist system has enabled the Soviet Union to play the determining role in crushing Hitler fascism, thus saving Europe from barbarian enslavement."²

Wilhelm Pieck, the first President of the German Democratic Republic, stated: "It would not be an exaggeration for us to say that the German people are obliged to the Soviet Union not only for liberation from Hitler's bloody domination and, on one-third of German territory, from the reactionary forces of German imperial-

¹ *Pravda*, 20 April 1962.

² *L'Humanité*, 9 November 1957.

ism as well, but also for the preservation of their national existence."¹

Leaders of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese People's Republic repeatedly pointed out the impact of the Soviet victory on the development of the people's liberation struggle including those in China and other Asian countries. For example, a telegram from the Chinese leadership on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Red Army said that during the Second World War the Red Army "destroyed the main forces of the aggressive armies of German and Japanese fascism and thereby defended the independence of all countries and saved human civilisation."²

The victory of socialism over the forces of imperialist reaction was achieved at a heavy price. The Soviet Union bore the heaviest human and material losses. The war destroyed over 20 million human lives. Retreating under the blows of the Red Army the fascist troops left behind them burnt villages and ruined cities, blown-up factories and power stations, flooded mines, the rubble of cultural monuments and the horrors of unprecedented bloody crimes. On the Soviet territory, the Hitlerites destroyed 1,710 towns and urban settlements, over 70,000 villages, and left about 25 million people homeless. Almost 32,000 industrial enterprises and 65,000 km of railway lines were either wholly or partially destroyed and tens of thousands of collective and state farms were plundered.

The colossal damage caused to the Soviet economy by the Hitlerites, together with military expenditures and loss of income from industry and agriculture in areas subject to occupation, totalled 2,569 billion roubles (in 1941 state prices). The Soviet Union lost almost 30 per cent of its national wealth.³

The victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War was an historically determined and natural phenomenon. It provided convincing proof of the indestructible strength of the socialist state of workers and peasants, the ideas of the October Revolution, and of Marxist-Leninist teaching. This victory marks the triumph of the Soviet social and state structure born in the October Socialist Revolution, the socialist economy, the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the moral and political unity of Soviet society, and the indestructible friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The war showed that the nation inspired by the ideas of scientific communism and closely united around the Communist Party is invincible. As Lenin said, "A nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power, for the rule of the working people, for the

¹ Wilhelm Pieck, *Reden und Aufsätze*, Vol. III, Berlin, 1954, p. 103.

² *Pravda*, 23 February 1958.

³ *60 Years of the Soviet Economy*, Moscow, 1977, p. 17 (in Russian).

cause whose victory will ensure them and their children all the benefits of culture, of all that has been created by human labour—such a nation can never be vanquished.”¹

The revolutionary energy of the working class and all sections of Soviet society and their devotion to communist ideals were fully displayed in their defence of the socialist Homeland. The Soviet people withstood the most severe trials because the Leninist Party inspired and organised all their victories. Only a Party which enjoyed great prestige, trust and respect among working people could lead them to victory. All the people of the Soviet Union followed the leadership of the Communist Party in the war effort at the front and in the factories, making heavy sacrifices.

The Party possessed well-trained leaders in the state, economic and military fields. By skillfully deploying its forces and concentrating them where victory was to be forged, the Party was a genuinely militant and fighting party. Through the wisdom of the Communist Party and the iron will of its leaders, the vast country became a united and coordinated body which operated with maximum intensity and drive. There was no section of the people's struggle where its tireless activity was not evident. The Party discovered the objective potentials for winning victory, which were inherent in a socialist system and a socialist way of life and mobilised the masses to put them into practice.

In a difficult period millions of Soviet people linked their destiny with that of the Party. During the war more than 5 million people, of whom 32.1 per cent were workers, became candidate members of the Party and about 3.5 million became members. By the end of 1945, workers accounted for 33.8 per cent of Party membership. The cohesion of all Soviet people around the Party was one of the key sources of strength and invincibility of the socialist power.

The invincible might of the Soviet armed forces was a crucial condition for the Soviet people's historic victory. No other army in the world has as yet been destined to bear such severe trials or to win such outstanding victories on the field of battle. Experience showed that the military organisation of the working class in power, the organisation rooted in the advantages of the Soviet social and state system and relying on the support of all the people, was far superior in all respects to the military organisation of the fascist countries.

The guerilla struggle on a vast scale against the fascist invaders on the seized territory was one of the greatest manifestations of the Soviet people's unrelenting drive for victory. There is no other

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of the Railwaymen of Moscow Junction, April 16, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 319.

example in history of such mass heroism as that shown by the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War.

The victory of the Soviet people over German fascism and Japanese militarism was an important milestone in world history. It had a tremendous impact on the fate of the whole of mankind. It is impossible to overestimate its consequences for the world revolutionary process, the international working class and national liberation movement, the fight for peace, democracy and social progress. This victory showed that "There is no force in the world which could turn back the mighty flood of revolutionary transformation begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution. The defeat of fascist Germany—a bastion of imperialism—largely determined the post-war development of the world. This victory became a starting point for a new and powerful revolutionary upsurge which led to the collapse of capitalism in a whole number of countries in the West and in the East. This victory laid the beginnings of profound changes in world politics, economics and ideology, in the consciousness of millions of people."¹

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*. Speeches and Articles, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 144 (in Russian).

Chapter 10

THE LEADING FORCE IN THE ANTI-FASCIST LIBERATION STRUGGLE

HOW MASS RESISTANCE TO THE FASCIST AGGRESSORS WAS ORGANISED

The Second World War was unparalleled in history in its scope and intensity, in the numbers involved, the quantity and nature of its arms, in its colossal human sacrifice and material destruction. 61 states with a total population of 1,700 million people were involved, in other words, three-quarters of humankind.

The war was unleashed by the aggressive fascist-military bloc when the capitalist socio-political system had ceased to dominate the world. The first socialist state, the Soviet Union, was in existence and steadily becoming more powerful. This fundamentally new factor, absent from the First World War, decisively influenced the changing character of the Second World War. It also profoundly influenced the attitude of the working class in different countries, and of the international labour and communist movement to the war, to its aims and results.

The Second World War was due to the sharp exacerbation of imperialist contradictions and, initially, was a conflict between two capitalist coalitions, each with their imperialist aims. It is, however, essential to bear in mind that the aggressive policy of the fascist bloc constituted a particular danger to the international proletariat. Fascism resorted to war in order to achieve world domination. It was out to destroy the first socialist state, to subjugate other countries and introduce its predatory "new order", and to suppress the working-class and communist movement and all progressive forces. From its very commencement the war was a just struggle for freedom by the people of Poland, Yugoslavia, and other countries, victims of aggression. *Thus there developed the process of war transforming into a just war of liberation by the countries and social forces fighting the fascist aggressors.*

In the most complicated conditions of a growing military conflagration, the communist parties and the international working class

strove to unite the forces hostile to fascism and to organise an effective rebuff to aggression. Following Germany's attack on Poland, the German, Austrian, and Czechoslovak communist parties issued a joint statement which said: "The Communists are doing everything in their power to link the liberation struggle of the German working class with the national liberation struggle of the Czechs, Slovaks, Austrians and Poles, and to set up a strong united front against German imperialism."¹

In its statement dated 25 August 1939, the French Communist Party emphasised that "in a genuine struggle against the fascist aggressor, the Communist Party claims its right to be in the front ranks."² The Communists pointed to the imperative necessity of making the war against nazi Germany anti-fascist and popular in character, warning that "a government that fears the people is heading for defeat".³

Although the British and French governments declared war on Germany they did nothing to render effective assistance to Poland, in reality leaving it to be torn to pieces by the fascist aggressor. This passivity was the continuation of the Munich policy. Fascist Germany was left in no doubt as to the extent to which imperialism desired its aggression to be directed against the USSR. Furthermore, Western ruling circles displayed unusual activity in organising various anti-Soviet campaigns. The anti-Soviet, anti-communist stand taken by the governments of the bourgeois-democratic states brought grist to the mill of fascist policy and impeded the development and emergence of national liberation tendencies during the early days of the war.

In these difficult circumstances the attitude of the working class, and in the first place of its leadership—the communist parties, was of paramount importance. The November 1939 Appeal of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) characterised the war as imperialist on both sides and stressed that "in this war the blame falls on all capitalist governments, and primarily the ruling classes of the belligerent states".⁴ At the same time, the Comintern directives and the activities of the communist parties and the international working class took into account the anti-fascist, liberatory tendencies of the war. In the summer of 1940, the leadership of the Comintern and the Dutch, Danish, and Norwegian communist parties discussed how to act to restore their national independence and defend the workers' vital interests. When Hitler's

¹ Walter Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1955, p. 335.

² *L'Humanité*, 25 August 1939.

³ *La vie ouvrière*, 29 September 1939.

⁴ *World News and Views*, Vol. 19, No. 53, 11/XI, 1939, p. 1074.

troops threatened Paris, the Central Committee of the French Communist Party put its proposals for defending the capital to the French government and called on it "to change the character of the war by turning it into a just war of the people for their independence".¹ The Comintern urged the communist parties to work for the unity of all sections of the people ready to fight the occupying forces. It also pointed out that the working class headed by the Communist Party must form the leadership of the anti-fascist liberation movement. As the directive of the Secretariat of the ECCI of 22 June 1940 stressed, it was essential to explain to the French people that "only the working class led by the Communist Party is capable of rallying the nation in a powerful front in defence of its vital interests and in the struggle against foreign bondage—for an independent, genuinely free France".²

During the second half of 1940 and the first half of 1941 the communist movement adopted new measures to achieve a united anti-fascist front. In several countries in 1940, communist parties put forward the slogan of struggle for a united anti-fascist government; in other instances the slogan for a government of national unity or national defence was revived. This was of considerable importance for Yugoslavia which was directly threatened by a German attack. After the commencement of fascist aggression against Greece and Yugoslavia the Communists set themselves the task of achieving national unity to defend the independence of their people and to develop the struggle against the invaders.

In April 1941 the journal *Communist International*, emphasising the ties between the international and patriotic interests of the working class, wrote: "In defending their people, upholding their interests against the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie, fighting at the same time against the enslavement of their people by foreign imperialism, and in other countries coming out resolutely against imperialist seizures and enslavement by their bourgeoisie of foreign nations, the Communists are serving the cause of true proletarian internationalism, for in this way they are rendering the most effective assistance both to their own people and to the workers of other countries".⁴ On 11 May 1941, the leadership of the ECCI in calling for intensification of the struggle by peoples subjected to fascist attack and enslavement, also pointed to the necessity for a struggle against the collaborationists.

Fascist aggression meant that the communist parties and the working class were faced with the task of uniting all patriotic, anti-

¹ Maurice Thorez, *Fils du peuple*, p. 176.

² Georgi Dimitrov, *a Prominent Leader of the Communist Movement*, Moscow, 1972, p. 378 (in Russian).

³ *The Communist International*, No. 4, 1941, p. 12 (in Russian).

fascist forces and strengthening friendship with the USSR. In a letter to the Bulgarian Communist Party on 10 May 1941, Georgi Dimitrov pointed out: "The Party's main task at this stage is to explain to the people the danger of complete national enslavement and to rally the nation's stable forces in the fight for national independence." On 15 May 1941, the Central Committee of the French Communist Party called for the formation of a national front for the independence of France, which would unite all patriotic forces and be a broad alliance for the national liberation struggle against the fascist invaders and their accomplices.

Hence, even prior to the attack on the USSR by Hitler Germany, the communist movement had embarked on the anti-fascist national front policy drafted by the 7th Congress of the Comintern in 1935 and to adapt it creatively to the new circumstances.

During the early stages of the war, the main concern of the Comintern and its member-parties was to mobilise and unite the democratic forces for resistance against fascist enslavement. It was the communist parties that organised the first anti-fascist actions, it was Communists who constituted the nuclei of the first fighting groups and guerilla units and who were the first heroes of the Resistance. For the proletariat of the occupied countries the period from the commencement of the war until 22 June 1941 was one in which they built up their strength, prepared their organisation and propaganda for mass struggle and established and strengthened their underground anti-fascist organisations.

Hitler Germany's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union opened up a new stage in the Second World War. Not only was the socialist state in mortal danger, but also the international labour and communist movement and all progressive forces, in fact the whole civilised world, were under threat.

From the commencement of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, *the transformation of the Second World War into a just war of liberation by all countries and peoples opposed to the fascist bloc was completed*. The Soviet Union now became the main military, economic and political force in the struggle against fascism and its plans to achieve world domination. In their heroic confrontation with the aggressors the Soviet working class and all Soviet people were not only defending the independence of their country, but the freedom of other peoples, the future of the whole world and social progress. In this way the working class fulfilled its internationalist mission as a creative and militant class.

A mighty wave of international support for the USSR by workers of many countries followed fascist Germany's attack. In Europe and Asia, North and South America, Africa and Australia, broad sections of the people were expressing warm sympathy for the just

fight of the Soviet people. Trade unions and other working people's organisations, prominent public figures, representatives of science and the arts, all supported the Soviet Union, calling for joint action in the war against the common enemy.

This movement was led by Communists, the most consistent champions of the national and social liberation of the working people and the most courageous fighters against fascism and war. Fulfilling their internationalist duty, the communist parties called on their compatriots to rally to the defence of the USSR.

In its letters of 22-23 June 1941 addressed to the communist parties, the Comintern pointed out that the treacherous attack against the USSR was not only aggression against the land of socialism, but against the liberty and independence of all nations the world over. Therefore, the struggle of the Soviet Union was at the same time the defence of everyone enslaved by fascism, and of all those whom it threatened.

The ECCI defined the tasks confronting the Communist Parties in allied countries the following way: to oppose fascist aggression, ensure all-out support of the Soviet people in their just war and to fight any accomplices of fascism. It advised the communist parties to campaign for the formation of a reliable "united front of the USSR, Britain, USA, and the governments of other countries fighting fascist Germany".¹ Thereby steps were taken to set up a powerful coalition of states and peoples in order to defeat the aggressors.

The British, American, Canadian and other communist parties strove to achieve the mobilisation of all national forces for active participation in the anti-fascist war and all possible support of the Soviet Union. Communists stressed the vital importance of unity and close cooperation between the democratic countries. The strategy of the communist parties of these countries was to ensure the defeat of fascism. At the same time, it was combined with defence of the workers' class interests.

The British Communist Party emphasised in its declaration that "The cause of the Soviet Union is the cause of working people throughout the world, the cause of freedom, of socialism." It called "for immediate military and diplomatic agreement between Britain and the Soviet Union." The declaration of the Communist Party of the United States said: "The American people—the workers, toiling farmers, the Negro masses, the middle-classes—all those who hate fascism and oppression and cherish peace and liberty, will see in the cause of the Soviet Union and its peoples the cause of all advanced and progressive mankind".²

¹ *Georgi Dimitrov*..., p. 394.

² *Daily Worker*, 23 June 1941.

The entry of the USSR into the war against the aggressors invigorated the anti-fascist Resistance movement in countries subjugated by the fascists: "Hitler's aggression against the Soviet Union", wrote Maurice Thorez, "stimulated our Resistance, particularly the armed resistance. After 22 June 1941, patriots have started thinking differently. We are not alone. With such an ally as the Soviet people we can achieve liberation. We can win".¹

Early in July 1941 the Comintern leadership recommended the communist parties in the occupied countries "to immediately commence the organisation of a united front and for this purpose to establish contact with all forces, irrespective of their political stance, which are opposed to fascist Germany".² This policy was aimed at the creation of a broad national front for developing an active anti-fascist struggle.

The creation of anti-fascist national fronts in a number of countries proved the correctness of the strategy and tactics adopted by the communist movement, and showed the growth of activity by the workers who were the nucleus of the mass organisations, and of the armed units which emerged during the development of the Resistance movement.

The ECCI indicated to the communist parties in the occupied countries that the guerilla struggle should be developed wherever the conditions were appropriate. The resolution of the enlarged meeting to the ECCI Secretariat in December 1941 called on Communists to concentrate all their strength to "expel the invaders and win national liberation".³

On the initiative of Communists, fighting groups and partisan units were formed. National liberation armies were created in Yugoslavia and Greece in 1941-1942. Armed Resistance organisations appeared in Albania, Poland, and France. Partisan units and fighting groups operated in Belgium, Denmark and other countries. The establishment of large, organised armed Resistance movements in European countries under fascist occupation was a great achievement of communist parties which helped to hasten victory.

In advising the communist parties on how to build the Resistance movement, the Comintern constantly analysed and summarised the experience of the struggle and urged that it be creatively adopted. One of the effective ways of mobilising the masses for the anti-fascist struggle was propaganda broadcasts. Taking part were Klement Gottwald, Dolores Ibárruri, Vasil Kolarov, Wilhelm Pieck, Palmiro Togliatti, Maurice Thorez, Walter Ulbricht and other leaders of the communist movement. Radio, too, was one method used

¹ Maurice Thorez, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

² *Georgi Dimitrov...*, p. 397.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

for contact with the anti-fascist underground. In 1943 national broadcasts were made in 18 languages almost round the clock.

One of the important practical steps taken by the Comintern which should be mentioned was the organisation and training of partisan units made up of volunteers from among Communists living in political exile in the USSR. Subsequently, many were actively involved in the Resistance movement where they proved their political maturity as organisers of the anti-fascist struggle.

The communist parties in the fascist countries adopted a genuinely internationalist position, resolutely condemning the attack on the USSR. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in its appeal of 24 June 1941 characterised the war against the USSR as a gross crime not only against the Soviet people but also against the German people. The party leaderships in these countries urged the expansion of the anti-fascist struggle. The ECCI called on anti-fascists to create and strengthen underground organisations and increase their activity. It stressed that the duty of true patriots was to expose the reactionary aims of the ruling circles, organise anti-fascist actions, wage a decisive battle to end the criminal predatory war and overthrow the anti-popular fascist regimes.

The Comintern paid serious attention to work amongst POWs. It was vital to rid them of fascist ideas, so that they could come to understand the true interests of their own people, and develop their own sense of civic consciousness. An anti-fascist school was set up for political work amongst the POWs.

Harsh repression, the confusing influence of fascist ideology and the brainwashing of the masses created extraordinarily difficult conditions for the anti-fascist struggle in the Axis countries. Of all the classes within society it was the working class which displayed the greatest ability in organising opposition to fascism.

During the war the activities of the communist parties in neutral countries had their own specific nature. The Communists of Sweden, Turkey and other countries persisted in their efforts to secure strict observance of neutrality, opposed collaboration by their governments with the Axis powers, and were against any concessions to the Hitlerites.

From the commencement of the Great Patriotic War the communist parties of Asia, Africa and Latin America declared their solidarity with the Soviet people. They explained to the people the international character of the Soviet people's struggle, called for all-out aid to be given them, and emphasised that the fascist bloc was the most reactionary force in the world. At the same time, the Communists of the colonial and dependent countries endeavoured to combine opposition to the aggressors with the national liberation movement.

The growth of the communist parties and the need to deal prompt-

tly with genuine problems arising in anti-fascist activities, plus the heightened role of the communist parties in the fight for national interests meant that a greater degree of independence and initiative was now required. Therefore, in 1943 the leadership of the Comintern concluded that "the organisational form for uniting the workers chosen by the First Congress of the Communist International and which corresponded to the needs of the initial period of the rebirth of the working-class movement, has more and more become outgrown by the movement's development and by the increasing complexity of its problems in the separate countries, and has even become a hindrance to the further strengthening of the national working-class parties".¹

It was also necessary to bear in mind that, due to the war, united action between all national and international forces within the anti-Hitler alliance was essential. The interests of the struggle against fascism dictated the necessity to sweep away all obstacles to the development of cooperation between differing socio-political forces. For these reasons in May 1943, the Presidium of the ECCI, with the approval of all its sections, decided to disband the Communist International.

The Communist International had led the vanguard of the international working class for a quarter of a century. It fulfilled its basic task with honour—to assist in the formation and strengthening of Marxist-Leninist proletarian parties. Remarkable leaders of national parties developed within its ranks. The Comintern was a splendid school of proletarian internationalism, laying the foundations for the unity of the international communist movement—a unity which is fulfilled today in new forms and is immeasurably wider in scope. It developed and strengthened in practice the main humanist tradition of the revolutionary working-class movement—the tradition of the struggle for peace, against imperialist oppression and wars. It inspired the working class and peoples of the world to struggle against fascism and prepared them for the heroic battles of the Second World War.

In adopting the decision to disband the Communist International the ECCI Presidium called upon all its adherents "to concentrate their forces on all-round support and active participation in the liberation war of the peoples and states of the anti-Hitler coalition in order to hasten the destruction of the mortal enemy of the working people—German fascism and its allies and vassals".² The working class in the various countries heeded this call. The international proletariat was building up its strength as the leader of the anti-fascist liberation struggle.

¹ *Daily Worker*, 24 May 1943.

² *Ibid.*

THE ANTI-FASCIST & NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

With the onset of the Second World War the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe fell victims to the Axis powers (even earlier in the case of Czechoslovakia) although in different ways. Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia were the direct objects of German aggression, Albania and Greece of Italian fascism. Meanwhile Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania became satellites of fascist Germany, in reality approximating to occupied states.

In the occupied areas of this region, just as in other parts of Europe, the aggressors instituted their so-called "new order". This was a regime of terror, oppression and coercion. The barbed wire of the concentration camps and the smoking chimneys of the crematoria became the symbol of this order. Millions perished at the hands of the fascists in the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Majdanek, Oswiecim, Dachau and others. The fascist terror machine was launched against the leaders of the working class—the Communists, and all patriots. In practice the "new order" included genocide and threatened the survival of whole nations.

Pillage of the occupied peoples accompanied the terror. Requisitioning, export of foodstuffs, and expropriation of industrial enterprises were daily occurrences. The transfer of foreign workers to Germany reached colossal proportions.

The main task confronting the working class of these countries throughout the entire period of the war was that of winning freedom from the fascist yoke, restoring national independence and sovereignty, and struggling for a fundamental democratic transformation.

A number of vitally important changes in the balance of class and political forces took place in several countries during 1939-1941. The ruling (property) classes, of whom a considerable section was linked with Hitlerism, became even more reactionary. In the satellite countries a large section of the bourgeoisie and wealthy petty bourgeoisie of the towns and countryside supported their regimes which were rapidly becoming fascist, while another section adopted a neutral attitude. Some bourgeois elements in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia collaborated with the invaders.

The increasingly reactionary nature of imperialism was confronted by the broadening anti-imperialist front, which opened new, more favourable opportunities in the fight for democracy and socialism. Petty bourgeoisie, and in some cases sections of the bourgeoisie, joined the anti-fascist movement in the occupied countries. However, the majority of bourgeois anti-fascists looked to the governments in exile and hoped to achieve freedom through the aid of Britain and the USA. Even when creating their Resistance movements

(Poland and Czechoslovakia) they tried to avoid the development of a mass anti-fascist struggle. The contradictory nature of the policy of the bourgeoisie, the disunity of its forces, its refusal to adopt the course towards the popular anti-fascist struggle and its outworn anti-Sovietism conflicted with national interests and nullified its claim to maintain its leading role in society.

This role passed to the working class which had accumulated considerable experience during the inter-war period. The communist parties, aided by the Comintern, had enriched their strategy and tactics and acquired valuable expertise in joint work with democratic anti-fascist forces and organisations. Having analysed the new conditions and the tasks arising therefrom, they developed the concept of a national front, creatively elaborating the idea of a people's front, and looked for practical ways to bring together all the anti-fascist forces. In Czechoslovakia this was under the slogan of struggle for the country's freedom; in Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania—for the formation of a people's government representing all patriotic forces; in Poland—for a democratic, independent Poland. In Romania the Communist Party in January 1941 proposed to other parties cooperation in the struggle for national independence. The Communist Party of Bulgaria campaigned against the establishment of Hitlerite control of the country and its involvement in the war.

In all the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe *the revolutionary workers' movement and the communist parties were the most active force in the anti-fascist struggle, its initiator and organiser.* As early as June 1941 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was leading an armed struggle against the occupying forces and their accomplices. The leaders of the pre-war bourgeois parties would not cooperate with the Communists. The latter created a mass organisation of the United National Liberation Front which united the working people around the Communist Party. A similar situation arose in Greece where the National Liberation Front (EAM) became the centre for all the democratic and anti-fascist forces.

The Polish Workers' Party (PPR) formed in January 1942 during the growth of the mass Resistance movement, set out to build a broad national front. Despite the refusal of the supporters of the London government in exile to take part in united action or joint armed combat, the PPR persistently worked for unity in the struggle for the freedom and independence of the country under the slogan of a national democratic front. In the autumn of 1942 the Resistance movement in Albania encompassed two opposing trends. The National Liberation Front was confronted by the so-called National Front established by the political representatives of the propertied classes favouring the West. It became evident at the beginning of

the war that, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, the anti-fascist wing of the bourgeoisie was against the liberation movement organised and led by Communists, and was hostile to the liberation of the occupied countries with direct Soviet military aid. This was especially clear in Poland where, despite the fascist policy of physical extermination of the Polish people, and despite the mass involvement of representatives of all classes in the Resistance movement, it proved impossible to unite it due to the anti-Sovietism and anti-communism of the right wing of the Resistance, which in some instances was even prepared to start a civil war.

The political circumstances in Romania and Hungary, especially after they entered the war, were particularly unfavourable for the growth of an anti-fascist movement. Furthermore, the communist leadership had sustained great losses, and there were deep divisions within the working-class movement.

The Communists regarded the organisation of armed struggle against the occupying forces and pro-Hitler regimes as the immediate task corresponding to the national interest and the mood of the masses. Bearing in mind the balance of forces and the social dynamics of the revolutionary process, the Communists formulated a programme which combined anti-fascist liberation and national democratic aims and was directed both against the fascist aggressors and the powerful capitalist and landowning sections linked with them, and against the survivals of feudalism. Consequently it was possible to visualise the national fronts as the basis for a new democratic power—a new form of democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry.

Influenced by the fundamental change in the war, the mass anti-fascist movement strengthened in Central and South-Eastern Europe. National armed units made up of anti-fascists based in the USSR played an active part in the war against fascist Germany.

The Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia was set up already in November 1942. In Albania the General National Liberation Council was formed in September 1943. In Poland, the New Year of 1944 saw the establishment of the supreme body of the National Democratic Front—the National People's Council (KRN). Agreement was reached on the formation of a National Front of Czechs and Slovaks, whose main force was the working class. Towards the end of the war the broadest possible unity of classes had been achieved in Czechoslovakia.

In Bulgaria, on the basis of a programme outlined in July 1942 for the formation of a National Front (OF) the working class was successfully united and its ties with peasants and middle strata of the towns strengthened. Local, and later national committees of the OF were formed halfway through 1943. The strongest influence in

these bodies was the Bulgarian Communist Party, supported by the overwhelming majority of the workers. The Patriotic Anti-Hitler Front started to grow in Romania in the summer of 1943, and following the conclusion of an agreement on cooperation between Communists and Social Democrats an anti-fascist alliance was built up around the Front including bourgeois parties. In Hungary the Communist Party proposed the creation of a broad national coalition for struggle against the Hitlerites and the Hungarian fascists. In the course of the liberation struggle the Hungarian National Front for Independence was formed.

The liberation movement of the peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe merged with the Patriotic War of the Soviet people against fascist aggression. The decisive support to the national liberation movements by the Soviet Union created favourable conditions for the democratisation of these countries.

It was primarily internal factors which determined the course of the revolution. The conditions and progress of the anti-fascist struggle varied in different countries. Nevertheless, during the final stages of the war, the working class came to play the leading role in the national fronts and broad popular coalitions.

During the war years the working class sustained considerable losses. Its more revolutionary activists were imprisoned, put in concentration camps, or sent to the front in penal detachments. The number of industrial workers was halved. The composition of the working class changed, and to a great extent it was separated from large-scale industry, not infrequently fragmented and disorganised. However, the workers learned a great deal from the war, and joined in the struggle for democracy and socialism in large numbers. The working class proved to be sufficiently united and powerful enough to lead the struggle in solving common national tasks and ensuring the powerful development of a mass national liberation movement during which it more clearly recognised its historic mission as a class. In some countries, during the concluding stages of the war, when the priority tasks were basically anti-fascist, liberatory and revolutionary-democratic in character, the working class was the undisputed leader and held decisive positions up to and including the exercise of direct leadership. In some cases the working class was united around its communist vanguard, in others unity of action was ensured through the cooperation of Communists with the Social Democrats or part of them.

Although the communist parties in the region worked in conditions of intense illegality and suffered great losses they nevertheless not only succeeded in working out a political line appropriate to the new conditions and tasks, but were able to win over a significant section of the workers, and assume the political leadership for im-

plementing the national front programme. Their strength was that their activities were organically related to the struggle for social and national liberation.

Yet, despite the efforts of the Communists to unite all anti-fascist elements opposing the occupying forces and local fascist regimes, their success was only partial. A substantial section of the bourgeoisie remained outside the national fronts or actively opposed their consistently democratic programmes. On the other hand, a considerable proportion of the broad masses became allies of the working class in the struggle for national liberation, although the pace at which this was accomplished varied.

The liberation of the countries subjugated by fascism and the overthrow of reactionary regimes in Central and South-Eastern Europe helped a free, democratic solution of the socio-political and economic problems. With the weakening, and subsequent defeat of fascist Germany as the main force of imperialist reaction, and the defeat of its allies and satellites, the world revolutionary process was hastened. The anti-fascist Resistance movement and the people's liberation wars and uprisings were transformed into democratic and socialist revolutions. While on the one hand there were differences in the socio-economic structure and in the alignment of class and political forces, on the other hand the level of capitalist development, the nature of its contradictions and the rate at which they were coming to a head, were common to the whole region. All these countries had similar revolutionary situations and characteristics, and their revolutionary perspectives were interlinked. These revolutionary conditions deepened in the course of the liberation struggle and the advance of the Red Army, both of them paralysing the extreme aspects of reaction in a number of countries.

During the struggle for national liberation in this region, the *popular democratic and socialist revolutions began to grow*. In most countries the struggle for the solution of democratic, anti-fascist, anti-feudal, and anti-imperialist tasks led to the transfer of power to the workers, peasants and urban middle strata, whose allies or fellow-travellers were to be found among some sections of the bourgeoisie. During various phases of this revolution, governments came to power in which, to a greater or lesser degree, the working class was the leading force. This ensured a consistent democratisation of socio-political life, the involvement of the main masses of the workers in revolutionary change, and the destruction of the roots of fascism and of foreign and local monopoly domination. This national liberation and general democratic movement acquired a deep social content. The revolutionary process in Greece was halted by British intervention.

The national fronts, which had gone through the fires of battle

against fascism, proved to be an effective alliance of the basic revolutionary forces, the basis for the reorganisation of the system of power. Their experience confirmed the conclusion drawn by the international communist movement that it was possible to create a special form of democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry, that is, democratic regimes which differed from customary bourgeois forms, while not being socialist.¹

The revolutions which grew out of the anti-fascist national liberation struggle tackled the tasks incorporated in the programmes of the national fronts. In the objective class demarcation and in the alignment of forces in the new organs of power, these revolutions to a greater or lesser degree assumed a proletarian character which helped speed up the revolutionary process to achieve socialist goals. The development of these revolutions during the second stage of the general crisis of capitalism was characterised by an improvement in the methods of achieving working-class aims and by a closer intertwining of the struggle for democracy and national liberation with the struggle for socialism.

The deepening general crisis of capitalism and the acceleration of the world revolutionary process led to the emergence of the world socialist system.

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On 6 April 1941, Germany and its allies attacked *Yugoslavia*. The old reactionary government capitulated on the 12th day of the war. The country was divided into several regions. The parties of the Right and bourgeois nationalist organisations which supported the monarchy took the course of collaborating with the occupying forces, national betrayal and fratricidal war.

However, within a bare 3 months following the capitulation, the Yugoslav people's heroic struggle against the invaders commenced. The Communist Party became the organiser and leading force in the fight. On 22 June 1941, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia called on the people to prepare for a general armed uprising.

On 4 July, the Politbureau of the Central Committee adopted a resolution to start an armed uprising. The response was swift and partisan units began to be organised. From the end of 1941 these units laid the basis for creating large formations of proletarian brigades, a considerable proportion of whose members included Communists and members of the YCL. The political platform of popular

¹ *The 7th Congress of the Comintern and the Struggle for a Popular Front in the Countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe*, Moscow, 1977, p. 372 (in Russian).

struggle proposed by the Communist Party brought together in a United Popular Liberation Front the working class, peasantry, intellectuals and youth. The Communist Party emphasised the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist aims of the struggle, calling on all sections of the people, irrespective of political, religious, national and other differences, to wage a determined war against the occupying forces and their accomplices within the country.

The struggle was not only against the fascist aggressors and invaders, but also against reactionary forces such as the Ustashes in Croatia, where a puppet government was set up, the Chetnics in Serbia led by D. Mihajlović, whom the émigré monarchist government appointed as Minister of War, the White Guards in Slovenia and other treacherous bands.

During this hard struggle the masses were becoming increasingly convinced that the old ruling classes had forfeited all right to rule the country: they had brought Yugoslavia to national catastrophe, let the fascist hangmen victimise its peoples, and themselves had become lackeys of foreign invaders. The CPY explained that the objective of the anti-fascist liberation war was not only to rid the country of the oppressors, but also to finish with the outworn political and social system, and to rebuild Yugoslavia on a fundamentally new socio-economic and political basis.

National liberation committees uniting all the patriotic elements of the population were set up on the initiative and under the leadership of the Communist Party. In December 1941, the Central Committee of the CPY in a directive to local party organisations said: "Party organisations must concern themselves with problems of the national liberation committees.... You should bear in mind the perspective of transforming the national liberation committees into future bodies of revolutionary power."¹ The working class played the leading role in the creation of a new system of people's power. Its development in the areas liberated from the enemy led to the formation of a single organisation throughout the whole country, uniting all the national liberation committees.² This took place at a first session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) in Bihać on 26-27 November 1942.

Towards the end of 1942, the national liberation movement had become the National Liberation Army (NLAY) and operated throughout the whole of Yugoslavia, holding down powerful forces of the fascist army. By autumn 1943 the numerical strength of the army had reached 300,000.³ According to Yugoslav sources, by this time

¹ *Kako je stvarana socijalistička Jugoslavija*, Belgrade, 1964, p. 70.

² *Prvo i drugo zasjedanje AVNOJa*, Zagreb, 1963, p. 171.

³ J. Marjanović, P. Morača, *Naš oslobodilački rat i narodna revolucija 1941-1945*, Belgrade, 1958, p. 217.

the National Liberation Army and partisan units had freed almost half the country's territory. In the liberated areas there was a unified system of government which covered several thousand rural, district and regional national liberation committees led by the anti-fascist assemblies of national territories.

At the second session of AVNOJ held on 29 November 1943, the Anti-Fascist Assembly became the supreme legislative and executive national representative body of Yugoslavia. Under the chairmanship of Josip Broz Tito, the first national government of the country was formed, known as the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia. It proclaimed AVNOJ the supreme representative of the people's sovereignty and the new state, and declared that the treacherous émigré government had no legal status whatsoever.

The second session of AVNOJ announced that the new Yugoslavia should be based on a federal system in which the nations incorporated therein would enjoy equal rights and self-determination. A federal structure, based on the most democratic principles, said the declaration, would guarantee full equality to Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrans and all other peoples of Yugoslavia.

In the decisions of the second session there was no direct mention of the socialist character of the new Yugoslavia, but the essence of these important decisions lay in the fact that they represented the basis for socialist transformations. The stage of national liberation struggle in November 1943 was not one in which the question of socialist transformation was directly on the agenda. At the same time this decision of AVNOJ indicated to the national liberation army fighters, the partisans and all working people the path which would lead to the basic socio-economic and political transformation of Yugoslav society. People of Yugoslavia gained a broad historical perspective of how the country would tread a new path, the path to socialism. By its class nature the new state was in fact the dictatorship of the proletariat realised in a specifically national democratic form by the working class in alliance with the non-proletarian sections of the working people, under the leadership of the Communist Party.

In autumn 1944 the Red Army drew nearer to the Yugoslav borders. By agreement with the National Liberation Committee and the Supreme Command of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, Soviet troops entered Yugoslav territory. Alongside the Yugoslav National Liberation Army and partisans the troops of the 3rd Ukrainian Front liberated a number of towns in Serbia, and on 20 October 1944, after a bloody battle, Belgrade, the country's capital city was also freed.

The liberation of Belgrade, Serbia and Macedonia created condi-

tions for further strengthening and improving the organisation of the National Liberation Army, which received essential assistance in arms and equipment from the Soviet Union. In the offensive for the complete liberation of the country new units and formations of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, including tanks, moved into action. In the spring of 1945 the German invaders were cleared out of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. After fierce battles Trieste was liberated by the NLA on 1 May 1945. By Victory Day the Yugoslav Army was 800,000 strong.¹

The Yugoslav people suffered terrible losses during the Second World War: 1,700,000 people died. The National Liberation Army alone lost 305,000 fighters and 425,000 were wounded.² The Communist Party and the Young Communist League sustained tremendous losses. Nearly 50,000 Communists fell in battle, 9,000 of them Party members prior to the war.³

Elections to the Constituent Assembly on 11 November 1945 resulted in total victory for the National Front. The Assembly pronounced the country the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. The new state was described "a federal people's state, republican in form; a community of peoples equal in rights who, on the basis of self-determination, including the right of secession, have expressed their will to live together in a federated state."⁴

The peoples of Yugoslavia, led by the Communist Party and fighting in close cooperation with the USSR and other peoples of Europe and throughout the world, defeated the enemy. New government institutions were created having all the basic features and functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Immediately after the war the working class and the entire nation concentrated their efforts on establishing the essential conditions for proceeding to socialist construction.

Having occupied *Poland*, German fascism set out to enslave the people and Germanise Polish lands. In this country, the first to engage in an armed struggle against Hitler's forces, the repression amounted to genocide. Of the approximately 30 million victims who perished in territories occupied by the Germans, the Poles lost over 6 million, that is, 220 per every thousand inhabitants. Poland lost 40 per cent of its national property.⁵

Faced with the deadly danger, all sections of Polish society opposed

¹ *30 godina socijalističke Jugoslavije*, Belgrade, 1973, p. 165.

² Vlado Strugar, *Jugoslavija. 1941-1945*, Belgrade, 1970, p. 355.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁴ *The Europa Year Book 1961*, Vol. 1, London, 1961, p. 1206.

⁵ Cz. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, Vols. I, II, Warsaw, 1970; *Zbrodnie i sprawcy (Ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii)*, Warsaw, 1980.

Hitler and joined the struggle for their country's national liberation. In conditions where all Polish political institutions and parties were outlawed, a mass political armed underground sprang up. All the political trends which existed during the inter-war years, set up their own underground centres and armed units.

During the course of the armed struggle the whole nation became involved in the Resistance movement. Workers' battalions heroically defended Warsaw; in Silesia miners fought against the invaders. Orders issued by the occupying powers met with opposition everywhere. Conspiratorial actions increased. Sabotage in industry, transport, and other spheres multiplied.

The Communists played an increasing role within the armed Resistance movement. From the beginning of the war they set about forming their own anti-fascist organisations and drew into their ranks left Socialists and Radicals (activists of the left wing of the Peasants' Party). In autumn 1941, having decided to support the struggle waged by the Soviet people and linking with it the approaching liberation and revival of Poland, the Communists formed the first partisan units.

The Polish Workers' Party (PPR) was established in Warsaw on 5 January 1942. The reconstitution of the Party, led by M. Nowotko, made it possible to set out a clear-cut programme of struggle for the national and social liberation of the country, in which the main task was the organisation of armed struggle against the aggressors. The struggle of the national anti-Hitler front for the freedom and independence of Poland was closely bound up with the movement towards the steady democratisation of Polish society, towards uprooting reactionary domestic and foreign policies which had led the nation to catastrophe. The PPR guided the Polish people towards joint action with the anti-Hitler coalition. It was the one party to declare that Poland's liberation could only be achieved in alliance with the USSR. The PPR organised its People's Guard (Gwardia Ludowa) and undertook the organisation of mass partisan struggle against the invaders. The Communists urged all patriotic elements to abandon the wait and see policy, and to develop an armed struggle against the invaders.

After the Battle for Stalingrad the resistance of the Polish people against the German forces increased noticeably, and the Gwardia Ludowa became the leading force in this struggle. The PPR Central Committee (whose leader, on the death of M. Nowotko, was P. Finder) oriented the Polish working class and all patriotic forces on the further development of the anti-fascist struggle as a people's struggle within the framework of a broad national front in preparation for an all-Polish uprising against the invaders.

We should mention that at the turn of 1939-40, there were more

than 150 political, armed and mixed groups of the Resistance in Poland, and in the following years their number reached several hundred.¹ This fragmentation of the forces hindered the development of the armed struggle against the invaders. The theory of the "two enemies", namely Hitler Germany and the Soviet Union, propagated by bourgeois politicians, did considerable harm to the liberation movement. These politicians stood for battle both against German troops and the Red Army should the latter move to the West.²

The supporters of this view, who denied the necessity for an active anti-fascist struggle, were uncompromising opponents of cooperation with Communists and their organisations. The right-wing leaders, in prominent positions in the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) on the whole supported the anti-communist attitude of the bourgeois politicians. However, the left wing of the PPS, established on 1 September 1941 as the Party of the Polish Socialists and from April 1943 known as the Polish Workers' Socialist Party (RPPS), supported active struggle against the invaders.

When, towards the end of 1942, masses of peasants living in Zamość were expelled in order to make way for German colonists, they began to take part in the armed struggle. Cooperation was being established between the Gwardia Ludowa which strove to defend the peasants from the tyranny of the aggressors, and the Peasants' Battalions (armed units of the Peasants' Party Stronnictwo Ludowe—SL) and also some units of the Armia Krajowa (AK) formed by merging small units and various political groupings owing allegiance to the London government in exile.

In January 1943 the PPR approached the legation of the London government in exile with proposals for joint action against the occupying forces. Despite the fact that neither the legation nor the AK Chief Command responded, in spring 1943 the PPR again proposed that the nation should take part in a united struggle against fascism. However, the people who had ties with the émigré government stubbornly clung to their anti-communist and anti-Soviet stance, and no agreement was reached. In addition, from the middle of 1943, the reactionary section of the underground attempted to instigate a civil war, attacking units of the Gwardia Ludowa, members of the PPR and the Union of Fighting Youth it sponsored, Left socialists, SL and Democrats.

This attitude of the leaders of the bourgeois underground prevent-

¹ E. Duraczyński, "Struktura społeczna i polityczna podziemia antyhitlerowskiego w Polsce 1939-1944", *Miesięcznik literacki*, No. 2, 1970, pp. 90-98.

² T. Walichnowski, *U źródeł walk z podziemiem reakcyjnym w Polsce*, Warsaw, 1980, pp. 32-33.

ed the unity of all patriotic forces and the extension of the armed anti-fascist struggle. The PPR, therefore, endeavoured to build a democratic union of the working class, peasantry, and intellectuals. In November 1943 the PPR Programme "What We Are Fighting For" placed in the forefront the struggle for establishment of people's power in liberated Poland, and for the creation of a national democratic state with the perspective of transition to a socialist system. The statement issued by the Union of Polish Patriots living in the Soviet Union formed in March 1943, also called for a policy to bring about the speediest liberation of the country, for a democratic Poland, and the establishment of friendly relations with the USSR. Polish Communists living in the USSR made an important contribution to the theoretical and political concept of People's Poland. On the initiative of the Union of Polish Patriots and with the assistance of the Soviet government, Polish armed forces were formed in the USSR and fought on the Soviet-German front from October 1943.

In December 1943, talks were held between the leaders of the PPR, representatives of the left wing of the RPPS, radical elements of the Stronnictwo Ludowe (SL) (in February they formed an independent party, the People's Will—WL), the Democratic party, underground trade unions, youth organisations and some others. As a result, a manifesto was adopted establishing Krajowa Rada Narodowa (KRN), a representative body which united these organisations in a democratic national front. The first meeting of the KRN was held on the night of 31 December 1943 in strict secrecy. The KRN, acting on the proposal made by the PPR, opted for consolidating all democratic forces in society and mobilising them for struggle against the occupying forces. A military-political union was officially formalised in a KRN decree on the unification of all armed units within the People's Army (AL). In the first months following the setting up of the KRN, large guerilla units were formed as AL brigades. By the middle of 1944 the Army numbered more than 50,000 men, of whom more than 20,000 belonged to guerilla detachments.¹

The creation of the Krajowa Rada Narodowa accelerated the formation of a new alignment of political and class forces, and its supporters swiftly increased. The consistently patriotic position of the Communists and their role as organisers of armed resistance to the fascist aggressors encouraged the steady growth in the prestige of the PPR, although in view of a number of factors the struggle to establish and broaden the working-class leadership took place in particularly difficult circumstances.

¹ *The Soviet Union and the Struggle of the Nations in Central and South-Eastern Europe for Freedom and Independence, 1941-1945*, Moscow, 1978, p. 46 (in Russian).

The KRN worked for organisation of provincial people's councils. Patriotic and democratic forces continued to rally around them, and the unity process drew in part of the AK members who were now prepared to cooperate. In the summer of 1944 an agreement was reached between the KRN and the Centre of Democratic, Socialist and Syndicalist parties that had been formed in March that year and included part of the Polish Workers' Socialist Party, Democrats, peasants and trade union activists. This organisation supported socialisation of industry, the need to unite the parties of the left and centre, and Polish-Soviet cooperation. KRN's military organisation, the Polish People's Army, joined the AL whose ranks included many units of the Peasants' Battalions, the AK (Socialists among them) and other guerilla groups.

Following the entry of Soviet troops into Poland, the representatives of the London government in exile and AK went underground. From that time onwards they fought not against the Hitlerites but against the KRN and the Soviet troops, even endeavouring to push the Polish people into civil war. However, the KRN did not allow itself to become involved in this armed confrontation and continued to work to unite all patriotic and democratic forces in order to achieve the main task, namely the destruction of Hitler Germany. This campaign was initiated by the PPR led, following the arrest of P. Finder, by W. Gomulka.

On 21 July 1944 the Polish Committee for National Liberation was formed in Chelm on the suggestion of the KRN and the Executive Committee of the Union of Polish Patriots. This was a provisional executive body which included representatives of the political forces within the KRN and the Polish exiles in the USSR. Its manifesto appeared on 22 July 1944. It emphasised that the PCNL had been created to lead the liberation struggle of the Polish people for complete independence, the restoration of Polish statehood, and the implementation of reforms that would guarantee the national democratic nature of the Polish state. The programme of socio-economic transformations provided for an agrarian reform, nationalisation of the main branches of the economy, improvements in the social security system, re-establishment of democratic rights and freedoms, etc. The 1921 democratic Constitution was to be reintroduced. Foreign policy would be aimed at creating friendly relations with the USSR and securing the return of former Polish lands in the west and north. The national liberation struggle was growing into a popular democratic revolution. In the liberated territories, power was already in the hands of the people led by the working class.

Following the de facto recognition by the Soviet government of the Polish Committee for National Liberation, Prime Minister S. Mikołajczyk went to Moscow for talks between KRN and PCNL

representatives and a delegation from the émigré government. These talks centred on the establishment of a united government based on the PCNL, with Mikolajczyk being offered the premiership, and three ministerial portfolios were to be filled by leaders of the London-based émigré government. As a military-political demonstration, the legation of the émigré government and the command of Armija Krajowa launched an uprising in Warsaw on 1 August 1944, aiming to seize power in the capital. They hoped by this means to increase their representation in a future Polish government. The Warsaw uprising was poorly prepared. The Soviet military command and armed forces of the Democratic National Front were not informed of these plans. Politically, the uprising was adventurist.

The population of Warsaw fought heroically. Since that was an anti-fascist uprising, liberatory in character, AL units joined in the fight. In the course of the uprising a number of democratic organisations involved in it recognised the KRN and PCNL.

At that particular moment the Red Army did not have sufficient power to commence immediately an attack on Warsaw, but the Soviet government ordered help to be given to embattled Warsaw. Arms, ammunition, medicines and food were dropped from aeroplanes. Owing to the adventurist policy of Polish reaction, the heroic struggle by the people of Warsaw ended in capitulation by the AK Command on 2 October. On Hitler's orders the Polish capital was reduced to rubble.

In the liberated territories workers' control was introduced in the enterprises, and the workers re-established and rallied together their unions which came out in support of the PCNL. A new Polish Socialist Party (PPS) based on the left wing of the RPPS was formed in September 1944 and declared its allegiance to the Polish Committee for National Liberation. The united action of the workers' parties and trade unions became the basis for strengthening the leadership of the working class in the revolutionary process. The re-created SL and Stronnictwo Demokratyczne (SD) also supported the Polish Committee for National Liberation.

The creation of these parties was an important part of the process of formation of the political system of people's Poland, of establishing a new system of people's democracy which represented the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the working class, peasantry and worker intellectuals, uniting the petty-bourgeoisie and a section of the middle strata of the population. Having now achieved a mass basis for people's power, the KRN decided on 31 December 1944 to transform the PCNL into a Provisional Government of the Polish Republic.

Together with the Red Army, the Polish People's Army fought for the liberation of Poland and took part in the final rout of fascist

Germany. The Polish people made a significant contribution to the victory over fascism. During 1939-1945 about 2 million Poles fought in the regular army and guerilla units; there were some 300 organisations in the Resistance movement with a membership of over 1 million.¹ The working class played a decisive role in the armed struggle on Polish territory, in the creation of people's power, in preventing the destruction of the nation's industry by the retreating fascists, in re-establishing production, agrarian reforms, and in the development of reunified Polish lands. It was the leading force in the democratic national front and the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle, in the transformation of the national liberation struggle into a national democratic revolution. It was the initiator of that turning-point in Polish history which the Agreement on Friendship, Mutual Aid and Post-War Cooperation with the USSR signed on 21 April 1945 proved to be.

The fascist enslavement of *Czechoslovakia* was a national tragedy for the Czechoslovak people. Their whole future was threatened, for the fascists had proclaimed it their intention to destroy the Slav nations and Germanise them.

From the very beginning of the occupation Czechs and Slovaks began to struggle against the fascist conquerors and their accomplices. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarded the struggle against the occupying forces as its main task and was in the forefront of the fight for national liberation. It called on the people to unite in the Resistance movement, with the working class playing the leading role in it. The Party considered that the restitution of national independence and statehood was bound up with "the international struggle against fascism".² The Party's organisational structure was adapted to the new conditions of underground work. The Central Committee was set up, its centre abroad, led by Klement Gottwald. In the Czech lands the Party was led by its underground Central Committee. Party organisations on the Slovak territory were independent bodies. The overall leadership of Party activity was conducted by the Central Committee Centre Abroad.

The Party launched intensive propaganda for a wide struggle against the occupying forces and against making the country an arsenal for German imperialism. It called for intensive industrial sabotage to be used. During 1940-1941 the Communists organised strikes and other actions under the slogan of defence of the economic interests of the workers.

Striving to unite all anti-fascist forces both at home and abroad around the working class, the CPC endeavoured to cooperate with

¹ *The Soviet Union and the Struggle of the Nations...*, p. 75.

² *The 7th Congress of the Comintern and the Struggle against Fascism and War*, Moscow, 1975, p. 501 (in Russian).

the anti-fascist émigrés grouped around E. Beneš, while opposing the wishes of the pro-Western bourgeois émigrés to monopolise the political leadership of the movement. The Resistance movement which, in the first instance, was spearheaded against the fascist occupying forces, dealt a blow, too, at internal reaction. Consequently, the anti-fascist Resistance, which was a basically national liberatory movement, also assumed an important social dimension. The recommendations of the ECCI to the leadership of the Czechoslovak Party indicated the link between national and social liberation, stressing the need for the working class, led by the communist party, to become the main force in the liberation struggle.¹

The Resistance movement in Czechoslovakia became active with the start of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. While at first the Resistance assumed predominantly passive forms, with the onset of the new stage of the war it broadened considerably and changed in character. The leading role of the working class in the anti-fascist liberation struggle strengthened. In the autumn of 1941 on the initiative of the Communist Party a Central National Revolutionary Council (CNRC) was set up as the political organisation of the national anti-fascist struggle inside the country. Various groupings and organisations of the Resistance movement attached themselves to this body and one similar was set up in Slovakia in the spring of 1942.

The occupying forces responded to the heightened struggle by intensifying repression and terror. Members of the CNRC were arrested, thousands of patriots were executed and the villages of Lidice and Lejaki wiped off the face of the earth. Throughout the war against the fascist invaders, 25,000 Czechoslovak Communists perished, more than a third of the pre-war Party membership.

Nevertheless, the bloody terror could not halt the liberation struggle. In the illegal newspaper *Rudé Právo*, its editor, the staunch patriot, Communist J. Fučík, wrote in January 1942: "We Communists love our people ... that is why we spare no effort and fear no sacrifices in the struggle for the complete liberation of our people, so that they can live freely among free peoples of the world, equal amongst equals". In Slovakia the work of Communists ranged far and wide among Slovak soldiers who were being sent by the puppet government of Tiso to the Soviet-German front. Many went over to the Soviet partisans taking their weapons with them. The first partisan units operated on Slovak lands in the spring of 1942. In the summer, the underground CC of the CPC set about forming fighting units. The partisan movement on Czech lands and in Slovakia was

¹ *Georgi Dimitrov—a Prominent Leader of the Communist Movement*, pp. 372-74.

considerably influenced by Soviet partisan experience, and later by the direct assistance of Soviet people.

The formation of a Czechoslovak army unit in the USSR made a considerable impact on the national liberation struggle waged by the Czechoslovak people. Its first battle against the Hitlerites was in March 1943 by the village of Sokolovo near Kharkov. The unit subsequently became a brigade and later grew into a Czechoslovak Army Corps under the command of L. Svoboda, becoming the basis for the formation of the Czechoslovak People's Army.

In 1943, under the impact of the Soviet victories, the liberation movement in Czechoslovakia became much broader in scope. The CPC encouraged the people to prepare for armed struggle and to build up the partisan movement throughout the entire country. Partisan units emerged in many regions. The Slovak Communist Party led by K. Shmidke, G. Husák, and L. Novomesky, was preparing an armed uprising. The core of the Resistance was the Slovak National Council formed in December 1943 in which Communists were to the fore. This Council drew up a programme which provided for the creation of a united democratic state of Czechs and Slovaks, whose policy would be based on the principles of social justice and equality of Czechs and Slovaks, while its foreign policy would be based on an alliance with the USSR. In the course of the struggle in the Czech lands and in Slovakia an anti-fascist and national liberation front took shape. The signing on 12 December 1943 of a Soviet-Czechoslovak Agreement on Friendship, Mutual Aid and Post-War Cooperation was of particular importance in the growth of the liberation movement and in clarifying the direction of Czechoslovak foreign policy after the war.

Czechoslovakia's liberation began in the autumn of 1944. Alongside the Red Army, the Czechoslovak Army Corps under the command of L. Svoboda took part in it.

An outstanding event in the Czechoslovak freedom struggle was the Slovak National Uprising which broke out on 29 August 1944. During the uprising the ideological and organisational consolidation of the ranks of the working class was achieved through the merging into one party of Communists and Social Democrats. With the participation of broad masses, the uprising became national in character and set in motion a national democratic revolution. The Slovak National Uprising destroyed the clerical-fascist regime in areas under its control, and hastened its disintegration in the rest of Slovakia.

The Communist Party was the chief organiser and leading force in the uprising and in the establishment of a popular democratic power on the liberated territory. The Slovak National Uprising was of international significance, an organic part of the revolutionary

process which developed during the final stages of the Second World War.

The Czech popular uprising began in May 1945. It was organised and led by the Communist Party which relied on a broad support of the masses, the Prague factory workers in the first place. The Red Army came to their aid. Despite attempts by the bourgeoisie to capture the leadership, the working class imparted the uprising a popular, revolutionary-democratic character. The uprising was the culmination of the national liberation war of the Czechoslovak people.

In the course of the struggle, the Communist Party's policy for a resurgent Czechoslovakia on new, popular democratic lines was winning broad support. The Party became universally recognised as the leader of the working class, and the alliance of workers and peasants grew stronger. In its turn the working class led the broad masses who became convinced that "the CPC as the political representative of the working class was the sole force able to solve basic national and social problems."¹

On 5 April 1945, in Košice, on a territory liberated by the Red Army, a National Front government of Czechs and Slovaks was formed in which Communists occupied important posts. The Košice programme drawn up chiefly by the Communist Party set forth the goals of the national democratic revolution and formalised the leading role of the working class and the establishment of its alliance with the rest of the working people. For the first time in the country's history the CPC became the ruling party.

People's democracy, the revolutionary democratic power of the masses, led by the working class was established in Czechoslovakia. The national democratic revolution under the leadership of the working class guided by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was a new form of transition to the socialist revolution.

In *Bulgaria* during the war, the repression exercised by the monarcho-fascist regime failed to inhibit the workers' class struggle. Plovdiv workers were in the forefront of the struggle. In response to the call of the Plovdiv Regional Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Party on 19 June 1940, the tobacco workers went on strike. The tobacco workers in Asenovgrad, Sofia, Dupnitse and other towns followed suit. Very soon the strike included other industries' enterprises throughout the entire country.

The June 1940 strike played a big part in the battle of the Bulgarian workers to improve their situation. The government, alarmed by the upsurge of the workers' movement, was forced to partially

¹ G. Husák, "60 Years of Struggle for the People's Happiness", *Pravda*, 14 May 1981.

satisfy their demands. It sanctioned a new collective agreement which increased the wages of the tobacco workers by 10 per cent, and later decreed a 15 per cent increase in the earnings of all industrial workers.

Referring to the results and significance of the June 1940 strike, the 7th Enlarged Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers' Party in February 1941 stressed that "having achieved certain partial gains not only for the strikers, but for workers and office employees in all other spheres and professions, it had an enormous political impact on the whole country, encouraging and inspiring other sections of the workers to struggle."¹

During this period the economic struggles of the workers were linked with the struggle for political rights and freedoms, and with the movement opposed to drawing Bulgaria into an imperialist war. Peace and neutrality, based on friendship with the USSR were advocated. Thousands of telegrams and petitions were addressed to the government and the National Assembly from all regions of the country demanding that an agreement on friendship and mutual aid with the Soviet Union be concluded. By the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941 this movement was in the nature of a plebiscite. The slogan for a Bulgarian-Soviet pact became the political platform for united anti-fascist action. Although this mass campaign, in which the working class played the leading role, did not achieve its final aims, it was the factor which delayed Bulgaria's joining the fascist Axis, impeded Hitler's plans for the Balkans, and significantly influenced the further development of the anti-fascist movement throughout the country.

On 22 June 1941, the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party called on the workers to fight against their country's territory and resources being used by fascist Germany. On 24 June 1941 the Political Bureau called for an armed struggle against the Hitlerites and their Bulgarian collaborators, and the summer of 1941 saw the formation of the first partisan units.

A strike movement ensued. During the second half of 1941 there were 150 acts of sabotage in the factories. The result was that production in a number of factories fell by 40 to 50 per cent.²

The peasantry took part in the anti-fascist movement supporting the Party's slogan of "Not a grain of Bulgarian wheat, not a piece of Bulgarian bread for the German fascists and plunderers." The struggle of the working people under the slogan of "Not a single soldier

¹ *Българската комунистическа партия в резолюции и решения на конгресите, конференциите и пленумите на ЦК*, Vol. 3 (1924-1944), Sofia, 1954, p. 375.

² *Материали по история на Българската комунистическа партия*, Sofia, 1958, p. 357.

for the Eastern Front!" was crowned with success—not a single Bulgarian soldier fought on the Soviet-German front.

The ceaseless work of the BWP to unite all patriotic forces of the nation led to the creation of the National Front (OF) of Bulgaria. In its programme published in July 1942, the main points of which had been drafted by the Bureau-in-Exile under Georgi Dimitrov's guidance, the general national democratic tasks were enunciated: freeing the country from the Hitler yoke and the monarcho-fascist dictatorship, the entry of Bulgaria into the anti-fascist coalition camp and the establishment of people's power.¹ In August 1943 the nucleus of the National Committee of the National Front was formed, comprising representatives of the BWP, the left wing of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union, the political group Zveno, the left wing of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party and members of public, cultural, educational and other progressive organisations.

As the anti-fascist struggle grew, the National Front became a mass movement. Its committees led the fight for socio-economic and political demands of the working people, and carried out considerable political and educational work. By the summer of 1944, 678 National Front Committees were in existence.

On the initiative of the BWP in March-April 1943, the partisan units and groups were united throughout the country in the National Liberation Insurgent Army (NLIA) in order to prepare for a general uprising. The country was divided into 12 insurgent military zones under the general command of the HQ of the NLIA.² By the summer of 1944 there were 30,000 troops in the NLIA.³ The partisan units annihilated fascist garrisons, attacked main railway lines and blew up warehouses. The Georgi Dimitrov, Christo Botev, Stefan Karaja and Chavdar partisan brigades and their units in Gabrovo region became famous. Many fighting groups operated in the towns. Government troops began to desert to the National Front.

From August 1944, the BWP, now numbering 25,000 members, commenced direct preparation for an armed uprising. The Manifesto of the National Front Committee was published. It said: "The government should resign immediately. If it stays on, it spells disaster for the country... At the present difficult moment the fate of our Homeland can be eased only by a government of the National Front." The efforts of the BWP to unite the democratic sections of the Bulgarian people around the programme of the National Front were crowned with success. The Communists succeeded in winning the support

¹ *The Soviet Union and the Struggle of the Nations...*, p. 281.

² *История на антифашистката борба в България*, Vol. 2 (March 1943—9 September 1944), Sofia, 1976, p. 38.

³ *The Anti-Fascist Resistance Movement in European Countries During the Second World War*, Moscow, 1962, p. 242 (in Russian).

of the broad mass of workers, peasants, the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the democratic sections of the army for their political line. On 1 September the HQ of the NLIA gave the order "to commence decisive, bold actions". On 7 September the insurgents occupied the Plevna prison and freed the political prisoners, the miners of Pernik declared a strike, and the workers of Plovdiv, Varna and other towns went into action.

In Sofia, an uprising began on the night of 8 September, led by the Operations Bureau headed by Todor Zhivkov. The monarcho-fascist regime was dealt the final blow. The National Front government came to power and announced that Bulgaria was joining in the common struggle against the German aggressors. The army of People's Democratic Bulgaria fought together with the Soviet forces to free a number of regions in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria. The 9 September Uprising had opened the road to the building of socialism in Bulgaria.

Romania was drawn into the Second World War as an ally of Hitler Germany by the ruling reactionary clique, and against the will of the Romanian people.

The response of progressive workers to Romania's entry into the war against the USSR was to sabotage production in the arms factories, frustrate government decisions, and step up the anti-fascist struggle. The workers of Galati struck in protest against the declaration of war on the USSR on 25 June 1941. Leaflets and booklets distributed by the Communist Party called on the people to struggle against the Hitlerites and their Romanian accomplices. In the first months of the war the main forms of opposition were acts of sabotage, avoidance of military call-up or purchase of war bonds, and refusal to deliver agricultural produce. The setbacks of the fascist troops on the Soviet-German front resulted in an upsurge in the people's struggle against the criminal policy of the military-fascist clique in Romania.

The underground Communist Party of Romania was the leader and organiser of this struggle. In July 1941, it issued a manifesto exposing the aggression of the German and Romanian fascists against the USSR, and urging the people to do all in their power to assist in the victory of the Red Army, and to join in the united front to fight fascism, to win freedom and national independence. The aims and tasks for creating a united anti-fascist front were formulated by the CPR on 6 September 1941 in the Platform of the United National Front of the Romanian People Against the Fascist Occupying Forces and Traitor Antonescu's Military-Fascist Clique. It called for the cessation of the war against the Soviet Union and a joint struggle with the USSR and all freedom-loving peoples against Hitlerism; the overthrow of the military-fascist regime and the establishment of a govern-

ment representing the patriotic forces; and the arrest and punishment of those responsible for involving the country in a war against the USSR. The programme urged the Romanian people to undertake acts of sabotage and to develop an armed struggle.¹

On the initiative of the PCR, in the autumn of 1942 an underground Union of Patriots was formed. The platform of the anti-fascist struggle proposed by the PCR was supported by the democratic peasants' organisation Farmers' Front, the democratic organisation of Transylvanian Hungarians MADOS, and the underground union Patriotic Defence which established contact with anti-fascists thrown into prisons and concentration camps.

In the summer of 1943 the Patriotic Anti-Hitler Front was set up under the leadership of the CPR. It united all the above organisations and also local organisations of the Social Democratic Party. Its programme included all the main demands of the September 1941 platform of the CPR. *România liberă*, an underground anti-fascist newspaper, started appearing in 1943.

The Tudor Vladimirescu volunteer division of Romanian POWs formed in the USSR became an integral part of the anti-fascist Resistance movement. From the spring of 1944, this division was in action as part of the 2nd Ukrainian Front and subsequently fought in the battles for the liberation of Romania.

In the spring of 1944, having driven the fascist hordes from the USSR, the Soviet Army reached the state border with Romania. The peace terms offered by the Soviet government proved conclusively the friendly attitude of the USSR to the Romanian people and were judged by Western politicians as "in many respects unusually generous".² The Antonescu clique's refusal to accept these terms met with a hostile response by most of the population.

In April 1944 an agreement on the working class' united action was achieved. The United Workers' Front Manifesto issued on 1 May called on all patriots to unite for the overthrow of the military-fascist dictatorship and to turn their weapons against Hitler Germany.³ The Communist Party set out to develop an armed struggle. The partisan groups Carpathia and Mereshest were formed in June 1944 and began to strike increasingly telling blows against the fascist troops.

In the prevailing circumstances the traditional bourgeois parties, the National Tsaranist and the National Liberal, were compelled to cooperate with the Communist Party by entering into an alliance

¹ *Documente din istoria Partidului Comunist din România. 1917-1944* (further referred to as *DI PCR*), Bucharest, 1951, pp. 318-29.

² N. I. Lebedev, *The Collapse of Fascism in Romania*, Moscow, 1976, p. 455 (in Russian).

³ *DI PCR*, p. 355.

with the CPR and SDP in a National Democratic Bloc established in June 1944. Preparations for the overthrow of the Antonescu regime were under way. At a meeting held on 13-14 June, representatives of the CPR, the royalists and the army agreed on a plan drafted by the Communists for the overthrow of the military-fascist dictatorship. A Military Committee was set up to prepare the troops for the uprising. Local patriotic units were formed which worked closely with the CPR.

The armed uprising in Bucharest started on 23 August 1944. It overthrew the military-fascist dictatorship and set off a people's revolution. The Red Army's encirclement and rout of the fascist South Ukrainian Army Group 900,000 strong was decisive for the victorious outcome of the uprising. The success of the Bucharest uprising was ensured by the entry into the Romanian capital of Red Army troops on 31 August. Addressing the Soviet troops at a meeting in liberated Bucharest, a representative of the CC of the CPR said: "We express our gratitude to the glorious and heroic Red Army of liberators, who, together with the Romanian army, will rid our country of the Hitlerite savages."¹

In 1979, the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu, stressed the great influence produced on the anti-fascist movement in Romania by the Red Army's offensive and the struggle of the Soviet people whose sacrifices to save humanity from fascist subjugation had exceeded all others.²

In the months following August 1944, right up to the defeat of fascism in May 1945, the Romanian Army and the armed forces of the Soviet Union, in accordance with the peace terms signed in September 1944, fought together to liberate Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Participation in the anti-Hitler war was an important aspect of the anti-fascist struggle of the Romanian people in the final stages of the Second World War. It created vital prerequisites for abolishing the forces of internal reaction and fascism, and the achievement of profound revolutionary transformations.

In *Hungary* the development of the anti-fascist movement was hampered, not only by the terror exercised by the authorities, but also by the policy of the right-wing leaders of Social Democracy and the Party of Small Landowners, who cooperated with the Horthyites. Nevertheless, from the very first days of the attack by Hitler Germany on the Soviet Union, Hungary's best people, workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals, joined in the struggle against the country's participation in the war and boldly opposed the pro-Hitler Horthy regime.

¹ *România liberă*, 31 August 1944.

² *Scînteia*, 22 August 1979.

The Communist Party of Hungary conducted a consistent struggle against participation in Hitler's aggression. The Communists explained to the people the anti-national character of the aggressive fascist bloc, and its deep hostility to the interests of the working people. Leaflets published by the Communists exposed the anti-popular nature of the domestic and foreign policy of the government.

In September 1941 the Kossuth Radio began broadcasting from the Soviet Union, calling on the working people to fight fascism.

One of the first anti-war actions of the anti-fascist forces was the demonstration held in Budapest in October 1941 at the monument of the hero of the 19th-century Hungarian national liberation movement, Lajos Batthyani. On 1 November 1941, 5 thousand people were present at a wreath-laying ceremony on the graves of Lajos Kossuth and Mihály Tánczicz, outstanding fighters for the freedom and independence of Hungary. To honour the 94th anniversary of the 1848 Hungarian revolution, 10 thousand people demonstrated at the Sándor Petöfi monument. During these demonstrations anti-fascist and anti-Horthy slogans appeared. The reply of the authorities was terror throughout the country. From April to July 1942 an all-round attack by the police on the Communist Party ensued. Several hundred Communists, including members of the Party's Central Committee F. Roje and Z. Shenhertz, were arrested and died under torture.

The Battle of Stalingrad had a profound effect on the course of the anti-fascist struggle in Hungary. The defeat of the fascist army led to a growth in anti-war feelings and an urge for anti-fascist unity. The Communists were now able to establish cooperation with the National Peasant Party, the Peasants' Union which stood for the transfer of land to the poor peasants, with the left wing of the Social Democratic Party and the Party of Small Landowners. In April 1943 the CC of the Communist Party published a programme of action which indicated the way to withdraw from the war and to accomplish democratic transformations in the country.

As a result of the efforts of left forces, an anti-fascist strike of 20,000 workers was organised in September 1943 in the Weisz Manfréd factory in Csepel, and that same month an anti-war demonstration took place in Diosgyör. A semi-legal anti-fascist congress of agricultural workers took place in the second half of 1943.

The Red Army's offensive caused a split in the ruling circles. The government of Miklos Kálló began to establish contacts with Britain and the United States. In order to prevent Hungary's withdrawal from the fascist bloc, Hitler's troops occupied the country on 19 March 1944. The occupation was accompanied by repression, mass recruitment into the army, and bans upon the trade unions, the labour press, parties and organisations. In the new political circumstances, marked on the one hand by the strengthening of the Resistance

movement, and on the other by mass repression in the first half of 1943, from which the Communist Party sustained heavy losses, the CC resolved in June 1943 to continue party work under another name. In July 1943 it called itself the Peace Party. Its Secretary at that time was János Kádár, and the Central Committee included I. Sirmai, P. Tonnhauser, L. Orban and others. The Social Democratic Party and the Party of Small Landowners forbidden by the authorities now decided to cooperate with the Communists. A Hungarian Anti-Fascist Front was organised in May 1944, which called for the expulsion of the German fascist troops from the country, the conclusion of peace with the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, the creation of an independent, democratic Hungary, and the implementation of democratic changes. The Executive Committee of the Front was formed in September 1944. The Communist Party reverted to its former name and intensified its activities.

The creation of the Hungarian Front helped the working people to participate more fully in the anti-fascist Resistance. This was shown by the growth of sabotage in the factories, the fight to prevent industrial plant being dismantled and transferred to Germany, mass desertions from the Horthy army, and refusal to build fortifications.

The new upsurge in the Resistance movement started in September-October 1944 when Soviet troops entered Hungary. The anti-fascists went over to armed struggle. Resistance fighters wrecked wagons with food supplies destined for Germany, blew up railway lines and delayed the transfer of German troops. Soviet troops and Hungarian partisans fought side by side to liberate Miskolc, supported by 20,000 workers of this industrial region. In order to prevent the dismantling of the Csepel Works, the workers guarded it, and together with the Hungarian army soldiers who had come to their aid beat off the armed attempts of the fascists to seize the factory buildings. In the villages the peasants sabotaged the requisitioning of foodstuffs, livestock and implements. Throughout Hungary more than 7,000 people fought in partisan units, armed Resistance groups and army units that turned their weapons against the fascists.

In the liberated areas national committees of the Hungarian Front were set up which in practice became the local bodies of people's power. The workers' committees in the towns introduced workers' control in the factories, and the peasant committees set about dividing up the manorial estates.

The collapse of the fascist regime proceeded against the background of a democratic, anti-fascist, anti-feudal revolution which developed from autumn 1944 onwards. Its main tasks were defined by the Communist Party and were as follows: the destruction of fascism and the winning of national independence, the creation of people's power, and the implementation of an anti-feudal agrarian reform.

On the initiative of the Communist Party the Hungarian National Front of Independence was formed on 2 December 1944 in Szeged, and continued the work of the former National Front. It included the Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the National Peasants' Party, the Party of Small Landowners, the bourgeois Democratic Party and trade unions. The platform proposed by the Communist Party for the democratic development of the country was adopted by the new Front of Independence. Elections were held to the Provisional National Assembly, the first body of people's power, of which the majority elected were representatives of workers, peasants, artisans and democratic intellectuals. Of 230 deputies, 71 were members of the Hungarian Communist Party, a reflection of its growing prestige and influence among the masses. The Assembly formed a Provisional Government on 22 December 1944, which signed an armistice with the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition and declared war on fascist Germany.

Having concluded the armistice, the Provisional Government set about the reorganisation of the political and economic life of the country. The regency of the Hungarian monarchy was, in practice, abolished, although officially the country was not yet declared a Republic. On the insistence of the Communists fascist military and political organisations were disbanded, and so were the royal gendarmerie and the police, who were hostile to the people. At the same time a new democratic police force was being established. The restoration of the economy, destroyed by the war, commenced. Trade union activity, forbidden during the occupation, was re-established. An important revolutionary democratic change was the agrarian reform introduced in spring 1945. Landlordism was abolished.

The first condition for the successful development of the revolution was the consolidation of the forces of the working class and the strengthening of its unity. In October 1944, acting on a proposal made by the Communists, the Communist and Social Democratic parties agreed to united action in the struggle for a democratic and independent Hungary. By participating in the united front in determined struggles against the exploiting classes the working class extended its influence and successfully advanced its revolutionary cause. Working-class consciousness grew during these struggles and ever wider circles of the proletariat were won over to Marxist-Leninist ideas.

By 4 April 1945 the Red Army had chased the last fascist units from Hungarian soil. The Hungarian people gained true freedom and national independence. From the very start, the democratic, anti-fascist, anti-feudal revolution developed beyond the confines of a bourgeois-democratic revolution and contained elements of a socialist revolution, such as the establishment of workers' control in the factories and limitation of capitalist exploitation. As a consequence

ce of the revolution, power was transferred to the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, subsequently growing into the dictatorship of the proletariat. Popular power in the form of people's democracy was established in Hungary.

There was no organised resistance to Italian fascist aggression against *Albania* in April 1939. The King and the government fled, and the bourgeois and landowners' upper crust capitulated. Despite this centres of anti-fascist Resistance appeared from the very first days of the occupation. Small partisan units were active in the mountainous areas, and in the towns and villages underground Resistance groups were formed.

When the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people commenced, the anti-fascist Resistance in Albania entered a new phase. An underground gathering of 15 representatives of the main communist groups met in Tirana on 8-14 November 1941 at which the Communist Party of Albania (CPA) was formed, and a provisional Central Committee elected. The organisational structure of the Party was in line with recommendations made by the Comintern. Towards the end of 1941 the Party numbered 200 members. It was the only political party in the country at the time and it assumed the role of leader of the growing anti-fascist national liberation movement. On 16 September 1942, on the initiative of the CPA, a conference was held in the village of Greater Peza in a liberated area of Central Albania. 20 delegates representing the Communist Party, Young Communist League and commanders of partisan units attended.¹ The Conference adopted a resolution on the creation of a National Liberation Front and its leading body—the General National Liberation Council. The resolution adopted called for a struggle for a free, democratic and independent Albania, strengthening the fighting alliance of the Albanian people, and uniting all the patriotic forces within the country in a single National Liberation Front, irrespective of class, political and religious affinity.² Of considerable importance was the conference decision to form national liberation councils, which would become the embryos of a new, people's power.

The formation of the National Liberation Front led to a further growth in the Resistance movement and at the same time a polarisation of class forces. Towards the end of 1942, a bourgeois nationalist organisation, Balli Kombëtar (National Front), was set up in opposition to the NLF. The main objective of its leaders was to prepare the restoration of power to the exploiting classes after liberation.

The national liberation struggle of the Albanian people was an expression of international solidarity with other peoples fighting fas-

¹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, Vol. II, Tirana, 1965, p. 718.

² *Dokumenta të organeve të larta të pushtetit revolucionar clirimtar, 1942-1944*, Tirana, 1961, p. 14.

cism. The CPA carried out extensive propaganda explaining the identity of interests of all working people, and emphasised the significance of the struggle of the Soviet Union for the liberation movement in all the countries under the heel of fascism. Towards the end of 1942 there were 22 active partisan units¹ which controlled a number of liberated areas of Central and South Albania.

In the course of the struggle for liberation the Communist Party gained in strength. The First All-Albania Party Conference was held on 17-22 March 1943, which elected the permanent Central Committee. The decisions adopted defined the tasks to be solved during the war period and guided the Party towards a popular anti-fascist uprising. In the summer of that year, following these decisions, the National Liberation Army was created.

The change in the fortunes on the Soviet-German Front was the turning-point for the national liberation movement in Albania. The downfall of fascist Italy led to the end of the Italian occupation, only to be replaced by the Hitler army. So the battle continued.

As the territory of Albania was being freed by NLF units, the area covered by the national liberation councils grew, thereby ensuring a base for a new, people's democratic power. At the 2nd NLF Conference in September 1943, these councils were recognised as the sole form of people's power.² Their structure was improved, and their constitution endorsed.

The successes of the national liberation movement headed by the NLF General Council and the Communist Party, led in this period to the discrediting and actual breakup of the Balli Kombëtar, whose remaining adherents openly went over to the occupying forces.

On 24 May 1944, the first Anti-Fascist National Liberation Congress was held in the liberated town of Përmet. It set up a National Liberation Council representing the sovereign power of the Albanian people. A presiding board was elected, and the composition of the first government, the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee agreed on. The overwhelming majority of its members were Communists. The future government system would have to be decided by the people after the liberation of their country, although the Congress did decide against the return of the former King Zogu.

In solving the issue of power, the Congress laid the foundation for an Albanian people's democratic state. As the territory was liberated, people's power was established throughout Albania. In October 1944, the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee was officially reorganised as the Provisional Democratic Government.

Hitler's occupying forces were driven out of the country in Novem-

¹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, Vol. II, p. 720.

² *Dokumenta të organeve të larta...*, p. 58.

ber 1944, and during the period of liberation the people's democratic revolution developed. Its motive forces were the poor peasants, workers, progressive intellectuals and artisans. The special feature of the growth of this revolution was that the question of power had been solved even prior to the complete liberation of the country. In its character and goals, that form of power was the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry, in which the working class and its Communist Party played the leading role.

Greece was invaded by Italian fascist troops on 28 October 1940. The invasion met with active resistance by the patriotic forces. The Communist Party of Greece called for a decisive stand against the aggressors and for the development of struggle for national liberation. Thanks to the selfless work of the Communists who led the democratic forces, the war against the Italian fascists involved the whole country. The invaders were halted, and then thrown out of the country. The heroic resistance of the Greek people and its army wrecked the Italian plans for the occupation of Greece and dealt a serious blow to the overall prestige of fascism. Germany was forced to come to the aid of its ally. Hitler Germany's invasion of Greece in April 1941 delayed its attack on the Soviet Union.

Greece (except for Crete) was occupied by Hitler's forces in April 1941. The King and the government fled, the monarchists collaborated with the occupying forces, while the bourgeois democratic parties adopted a wait and see attitude. The battle to save the nation and liberate the country was led by the working class, headed by its revolutionary vanguard.

Nearly 2,000 activists and members of the Communist Party escaped from prisons and internal exile in the first days of the occupation. They immediately commenced to organise resistance. Already on 28 May 1941, the first Resistance organisation, National Solidarity, was set up on the initiative of the Communist Party to render aid to the victims of fascism. The heroic deed of Manolis Glezos and Lakis Santas, who, on 31 May 1941, tore down the fascist flag from the Acropolis, struck like a flash of lightning in the black night of fascist violence.

In July 1941, the 6th Plenum of the CPG Central Committee met. It set the task for the Communists to organise the people in the fight to overthrow the fascist yoke and in every way to support the Soviet Union. It called on the Greek people, patriotic parties and organisations to form a National Liberation Front (EAM), and this took place on 27 September. EAM included the Communist, Socialist and Agrarian parties, the Union of Popular Democrats and several other groupings and organisations. The most influential Communist Party occupied the leading role within the EAM. The Front declared its aim to be the struggle to liberate the country from foreign yoke and

win complete independence, to set up a provisional government and conduct free elections to the National Assembly, and to secure the sovereign right for the Greek people to decide their own form of government.

The occupying forces, instituted a regime of fierce terror, the economic life of the country was disrupted, and the people were literally condemned to death by starvation.

From the very first months of the occupation, the Greek patriots commenced an armed struggle. In December 1941 the EAM decided to unite the uncoordinated partisan units into the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) which subsequently launched a war against the occupying forces. By the summer of 1943 the successful actions of ELAS resulted in the growth of a large area known as Liberated Greece. By 1944, ELAS numbered 130,000 men. Its actions were combined with mass actions of the working people in the towns.

EAM laid the basis for the people's democratic power in the liberated areas of the country. A Political Committee for National Liberation (PEEA) was formed on 10 March 1944. That was the provisional democratic government of fighting Greece legally affirming the victories of the people. In September 1944, when the Soviet troops were thrusting forward in the Balkans, EAM roused the people to make an overall attack against the occupying forces, which succeeded in the complete liberation of the country in October 1944.

The majority of the nation rallied around the EAM. The authority of the Communist Party, whose members and supporters now numbered 400,000, grew immeasurably. Some 75,000 Communists laid down their lives in the fight for the freedom and independence of their country.

While the Communists were engaged in a heroic battle against the invaders, the bourgeois government in exile and its British protectors were preparing to seize power in Greece and destroy the democratic achievements of the Greek people. Taking advantage of the efforts of EAM and the CPG to bring about unity between all anti-fascist forces, they organised a so-called Conference of National Unity in Lebanon in May 1944. This resulted in the formation of a government in which all the key positions were held by supporters of the Greek oligarchy and British imperialism. At the same time armed units for struggle against the anti-fascists were being formed from right-wing reactionary elements.

When practically the whole of Greece had been liberated by ELAS, British forces landed on its territory. Relying on their support, on 3 December 1944, Greek reactionaries in Athens fired on a 500,000 strong demonstration organised to protest against the government decision to unilaterally disarm ELAS. On 5 December the British troops, supported by tanks, aeroplanes and the navy, started an open

struggle against ELAS. Right-wing circles, relying on British bayonets started an unheard-of terror in order to defeat the democratic movement and strengthen their own power.

WORKING-CLASS RESISTANCE IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

By the summer of 1941 the aggressive bloc of fascist states had complete command in the west, south and north of Europe. The Germans occupied Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and a considerable part of France. Austria had been forcibly incorporated into the Third Reich prior to the war. Several countries, formally neutral, either openly sympathised with and aided the aggressors (Spain and Portugal) or connived with Hitler Germany and its allies.

The danger of fascist enslavement and the loss of national independence by many countries in Western and Northern Europe, and in some cases the threat of physical extermination of whole peoples, provided a powerful incentive to the development there of a broad Resistance movement which inscribed a glorious page in the history of the anti-fascist war of liberation.

The working class in these European countries was faced with exceedingly difficult and complicated conditions of life and struggle. In different countries it was confronted with different tasks, and tackled them in different ways. However, these national objectives of the working class and its vanguard, the communist parties, were subordinated to the main objective of saving humanity from the threat of fascism and achieving freedom, peace and social progress.

The peoples of the annexed countries resolutely rejected the fascist "new order". The Resistance movement against fascism and for the restoration of national independence, freedom and democracy swept the occupied territories. This movement was closely linked to events on the battlefields. With the start of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people, the armed anti-fascist struggle became a mass struggle, and the Battle of Stalingrad, which marked a turning-point in the war, opened up a new stage in the struggle in Europe.

From the first days of the occupation the working class and its communist leadership was the most active, decisive force within the anti-fascist Resistance. The communist parties stood for the creation of a broad front of patriotic forces, for raising the liberation struggle to a higher level. Communists proved to be true patriots and internationalists, consistent fighters for the freedom and independence of the peoples. The communist parties saw the armed struggle against the fascist occupying forces not only as a means of weakening the enemy, destroying its personnel and military equipment, but as an

essential condition for complete liberation of their countries and the establishment of genuinely democratic systems of government. The Communists linked the struggle for the restoration of national independence with the demands for carrying through basic democratic reforms, the achievement of progressive social changes.

The consistent anti-fascist policy of the Communists and the working-class militancy strongly influenced other sections of the population, and the democratic and patriotic elements in society responded to the call of the Communists. As the anti-fascist struggle of the workers broadened, so the urge to actively participate in this struggle grew within the social democratic parties, the Christian trade unions and Left Christian organisations. In a number of countries, Social Democrats and Christian working people started setting up underground groups which became integral parts of the anti-fascist Resistance. The peasants, influenced by the revolutionary working class, became involved in anti-fascist activities. In many countries there were small, but active organisations of patriotic intellectuals.

In occupied Europe, fascism was not only a counter-revolutionary force, but it destroyed independent states, and threatened the subjugation and even the extermination of whole peoples. In these circumstances there occurred a split in the ranks of the ruling classes. While, in the words of the French historian, Henri Michel, "the big bourgeoisie was on the whole inclined to political and economic collaboration",¹ the patriotic bourgeois groups chose to oppose the fascist aggressors and defend national independence. The patriotic bourgeois wing of the Resistance considered that the main task was to restore the independence of the state, and to preserve and strengthen, even at times by the inclusion of reforms, of the bourgeois or bourgeois-landlord system. Although there were quite a number of sincere anti-fascists in the bourgeois-patriotic organisations, their leaders feared the growth of the mass armed struggle against the invaders, and called on the people to await the outcome of the war. Conservative circles tried to counteract the growth of the prestige of the communist and workers' parties.

The bourgeois patriotic Resistance movements operating in the occupied territories of a number of countries, established ties with émigré governments and organisations and the activities of the latter became an integral part of the Resistance movement.

A variety of methods were employed in the anti-fascist struggle. Patriots frustrated the orders of the occupying administration, conducted anti-fascist propaganda, held demonstrations and helped people persecuted by the fascists. The Resistance also resorted to such a tested form of working-class struggle as strikes, including those with

¹ *Aspetti sociali ed economici della Resistenza in Europa*, Milan, 1967, p. 28.

political aims. The participation of broad sections of the population in the Resistance made it possible to hold huge demonstrations accompanied by clashes with the occupying troops. During 1942-43, sabotage developed on a large scale. According to Wehrmacht reports, in 1943, on the territory occupied by Hitler's Army Group West, 3,454 attacks were made on the railways.¹ Fuel and ammunition stores, aerodromes, power stations and ordnance factories were also attacked.

The anti-fascist struggle in the Axis countries was conducted under extremely difficult conditions. The fascist and military-police regimes carried out a reign of terror and repression against the vanguard of the working class and against all anti-fascists. Working-class political parties, trade unions, youth and women's organisations were banned. Deprived of leaders and disorganised, the working class was subjected to mass ideological brainwashing. The temporary successes and demagogy of the aggressors encouraged the rise of a mindless wave of chauvinist and nationalist sentiment. In these circumstances a significant section of the working class in Germany, Italy and some other countries lost their class and political understanding, and supported the fascist regimes. Walter Ulbricht, assessing the ideas of people in Germany at that time, said: "Most of them had forgotten how to recognise their political connections. The evil spirit of militarism and of race theory had bitten hard, even into the ranks of the working class."²

At the same time, strict regulation and militarisation of labour and labour conscription were introduced in the countries of the fascist bloc. Freedom of movement and choice of place of work was limited. Where the ruling circles did not venture to forbid trade unions and to create organisations of the "German Labour Front" type, reorganisation of the existing unions took place, and government officials were appointed to leading positions.

Despite the prevailing difficulties, the political vanguard of the working class did not cease its anti-fascist struggle, and the more conscious section of the working class opposed the fascist system of coercion and demagogy. Communist work among the masses, and the people's dissatisfaction with the drawn-out war enabled the anti-fascist forces to increase and broaden their activities. The communist parties elaborated their programmes to unite the opposition sections in the struggle against fascist dictatorships, and for a policy of peace and national independence. In the satellite countries of Hitler Germany, the communist parties put forward as the main task a break with nazi regimes and withdrawal from the war of aggression. This immedi-

¹ H. Kühnrich, *Der Partisanenkrieg in Europa. 1939-1945*, Berlin, 1965, p. 424.

² Walter Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, p. 61.

ate political aim was organically combined with the struggle against the anti-national reactionary circles that had opted for agreement with the Hitlerites and become accomplices in the vicious attack on democracy and socialism. It was the Communists who, by exposing the adventurist, aggressive policy of the ruling circles, defended the true national interests of the people. Thus, the struggle of the vanguard of the working class against fascism was also a battle for genuine national independence.

In the occupied part of Western Europe the proletariat of *France* resolutely fought the Hitlerite aggressors.

On 22 June 1940 the Petain government signed an armistice with fascist Germany which actually amounted to France's capitulation. Two-thirds of the country was occupied by German troops, and the pro-fascist Vichy regime was set up on the rest. In November 1942 the Hitlerites occupied this part of the country too. The most brutal terror was unleashed on Communists and all progressive elements by the occupying forces and Vichy collaborators. After France's capitulation, all parties, with the exception of fascist, were banned. The bourgeois and the Socialist Party leaders disbanded their organisations. Only the Communist Party defied the ban, and immediately commenced organising resistance to the fascist aggressors. The Manifesto of the French Communist Party, published in the underground *L'Humanité* on 10 July 1940 and signed by Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos, emphasised: "A great people like ours will never be slaves... Great hopes of national and social liberation rest with the people. A front of freedom, independence and the rebirth of France can be formed only around the working class, passionate and magnanimous, full of confidence and courage."¹

From the very first days of the occupation, the Communists set out to organise the people's struggle against the aggressors. Following the Manifesto of the French Communist Party, people's committees emerged and led the first anti-fascist actions. The underground journal *L'Université libre* started in the autumn of 1940 by the Communists P. Villon, Jacques Solomon and George Politzer, became the centre of anti-fascist activity in the universities.

A special Combat Organisation (OC) was formed in the autumn of 1940 by Communists. From August 1940 to June 1941 its groups carried out 29 acts of sabotage on the railways.²

The line adopted by the Communists to ensure the leading role of the proletariat was best serving the interests of the struggle against the fascist aggressors and the Vichy traitors. The working class, the

¹ M. Thorez, *Oeuvres*, Book 5, Vol. 19 (October 1939-July 1944), Paris, 1959, pp. 57-58.

² A. Ouzoulias, *Les bataillons de la jeunesse*, Paris, 1967, p. 475.

most consistent defender of the national interests of France, was the initiator and the prime force of the anti-fascist Resistance. In May 1941, more than 100,000 miners in the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais started a strike which spilled over into a powerful patriotic action against the occupying forces and the collaborators. Despite the terror, the strike lasted until 10 June 1941. The workers of Paris and the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais were the first in the country to take up arms against the occupying troops.

At the same time, the Communists devoted a great deal of effort to drawing all the patriotic forces within society into the anti-fascist Resistance. An appeal of the PCF Central Committee for the creation of a National Front of Struggle for the Independence of France was published on 15 May 1941.¹ The National Front (FN) was formed in the summer of 1941. This included the Communist Party and other groups and organisations, diverse socially and politically but all supporting the anti-fascist struggle. Committees of the National Front were set up in the localities, in trade unions and enterprises. The outstanding scientist, Frédéric Joliot-Curie led the National Front in the northern zone, and one of the leaders of the Communist Party, J. Marran, in the southern zone. Communists played a leading role in the armed organisation of the Resistance, which assumed the name *Francs-Tireurs et Partisans Français* (FTP). Its overwhelming majority were young workers. All armed actions were controlled by the Party's National Military Committee. Units of the FTP attacked enemy units and patrols, destroyed railway rolling stock, blew up sluices and brought traitors to trial. In May 1942 the PCF was the first of the anti-fascist Resistance organisations to declare the need for a universal armed uprising.²

The FN became the most influential force in the Resistance movement and by its example inspired the actions of other anti-fascist organisations.

Bodies outside the FN were led by bourgeois and socialist leaders. These organisations were: *Liberté*, *Combat*, *Libération-Sud*, *France-Liberté*, *Libération-Nord*, *Ce de la Libération*, *Ce de la Résistance*, *Organisation Civile Militaire* and others. Outside France, in London, the Free France centre of the anti-fascist movement was set up under the leadership of General de Gaulle. From 1942 it was known as *Fighting France*.

The bourgeois-patriotic organisations of the anti-fascist Resistance were weaker and smaller in numbers than the FN organisations. They considered their main task to be the distribution of underground publications, anti-fascist propaganda, collecting intelligence reports, occasionally acts of sabotage. They regarded armed action against

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, p. 396.

² *L'Humanité*, May 1942, special issue.

the invaders as premature, refrained from taking part in strikes, and saw no necessity for mass demonstrations.

The defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad injected new life into the anti-fascist Resistance. The upsurge in the movement made it imperative to unite the Resistance forces and intensify the struggle against the invaders. At the end of 1942 an agreement was arrived at between the PCF and Fighting France, which envisaged close cooperation in the preparations for a general uprising.

In the summer of 1943 the French Committee of National Liberation was established, uniting the patriotic forces outside France.

Within France, early in 1943, the process towards bringing together all Resistance organisations was speeded up and in April of that year organisational unity of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) was restored. In spring 1943, the National Resistance Council (CNR) was formed in order to lead all the Resistance organisations. It comprised representatives of 8 Resistance organisations, the Communist and Socialist Parties, 4 bourgeois parties, and 2 trade union bodies, the Confédération Générale du Travail and the French Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CFSC). The establishment of the Council was an important step in uniting the Resistance organisations. Supported by the rank-and-file members of the Resistance movement, the Communists achieved the inclusion in the Council programme of a declaration in favour of armed resistance to the invaders and preparations for a general uprising.

In the autumn of 1943, as a result of Communist pressure, the Council decided to set up local liberation committees to lead the liberation struggle 'on the spot'. A document prepared by the Communist P. Villon and approved by the FN leading committee was adopted in spring 1944 by the National Liberation Council outlining a programme for profound democratic and social reforms in the country following its liberation.

Early in 1944 all the armed units of the home Resistance united in the French Internal Forces (FFI). The mainstay here were the French Francs-Tireurs et Partisans Français. P. Villon was appointed Chairman of the Committee for Military Action which had overall responsibility for the military actions of the FFI.

The defeat of the fascist troops on the Soviet-German front, the unification of the country's internal Resistance movement and its growing power and fighting activity put the organisation of a general armed uprising on the order of the day.

It needs to be said that those against an uprising, reluctant to oppose the idea openly, endeavoured to prevent the adoption of definite measures for its preparation. However, the communist leadership of the Resistance movement which relied on the broad support of the rank-and-file were able to overcome this attitude. From the mo-

ment of the Allied landing on French soil, the armed actions against the German invaders began to develop into a general uprising.

The Paris insurrection was of especial significance. Due to the counter-action of the opponents of the uprising, the National Liberation Council proved unable to take any decision. So on 18 August 1944, the Communist Party issued a call to start the uprising. At the same time, the CGT and the French Confederation of Christian Trade Unions declared a general strike, while the commander of the FFI in the Paris region, the Communist Rol-Tanguy, ordered offensive action to liberate Paris. On 19 August the permanent bureau of the CNR and the Paris Committee of Liberation adopted a resolution endorsing the uprising that had started on 18 August. The uprising resulted in the liberation of Paris. The city was saved from destruction. The Resistance forces independently freed many Departments in the country.

Following these victories there was an incalculable growth in the prestige of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard. In early 1945, the National Resistance Front created and led by the Communists was 2 million strong. The Communist Party made the greatest sacrifices for freedom and national independence; it is no accident that it became known as "the Party of the executed". 75,000 Communists, a quarter of the pre-war membership, died in the war.

The PCF was the largest political party in liberated France. In March 1945 it had 500,000 members. The first post-war French government led by General de Gaulle included 5 Communists, and Maurice Thorez became deputy prime minister.

Belgium was invaded on 10 May 1940. After a brief resistance, the Belgian army capitulated. The occupying powers introduced a harsh regime: democratic organisations were disbanded, the economy subordinated to Germany's interests, a system of hostages on various charges was introduced. The bourgeois parties ceased to function. The President of the Belgian Labour Party A. de Man announced the dissolution of the party and formed the "Union of Workers by Hand and Brain" ready to collaborate with the occupying forces. On his insistence, the congress of trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, called for active cooperation with the representatives of the "new order".

The only party not to submit to the decrees of the fascist rulers was the Communist Party. It went underground and led the struggle of the patriotic forces against the occupation regime. The Communists restored trade unions outlawed by the fascists, performed acts of sabotage, issued leaflets, organised anti-fascist strikes and demonstrations and led armed units of the Resistance.

On the initiative of Communists, factory workers, miners and railwaymen formed labour struggle committees. Large sections of Bel-

gians took part in the Resistance movement, but its nucleus was the working class. Belgian worker anti-fascists sabotaged arms production, evaded forced labour deportation to Germany and refused to collaborate with the invaders.

On 10 May 1941, the anniversary of Hitler's attack on Belgium, a protest strike started in Cocqueric led by J. Liao, a Communist Party leader. 100,000 steel workers took part in it. The strike had an enormous political impact not only in Belgium but in other occupied countries.

The Communist Party of Belgium worked consistently for unity of all anti-fascist forces. At the beginning of 1942, the Belgian Independence Front was formed by several groups and organisations of the Resistance. In its ranks Communists and Socialists, Catholics and liberals all fought side by side. The anti-fascist forces engaged in armed struggle against the invaders, organised counter-demonstrations and meetings against the rallies held by the collaborators.

Brussels was liberated on 3 September 1944, and on 8 September the government returned from London. In February 1945 the liberation of Belgium was completed. The upsurge of anti-fascist and democratic sentiment stimulated the reorganisation of the Pierlot-Spaak government to include into it two Communists and one representative of the Belgian Independence Front. The influence of the Communist Party of Belgium among the masses increased markedly. By the end of 1945 the Party numbered about 10,000.

In the *Netherlands* only the Communist Party decisively opposed all and any forms of collaboration with the invaders. It went underground and launched a struggle against fascism and for the country's national independence. The leadership of the CPN worked for setting up armed Resistance groups. The distribution of leaflets, pamphlets and underground communist newspapers was organised, and a solidarity fund to aid workers who refused to work in Germany was set up.

In October 1940, the Communists organised the first mass actions by the workers of Amsterdam, demanding improvements in working conditions, a change in the work schedules introduced by the invaders, and the cessation of forced labour deportation to Germany.

Early in 1941 demonstrations of many thousands of unemployed took place in Amsterdam. Fierce clashes broke out on 11 February between patriotic groups of workers and units of Anton Mussert's national-socialists.

Communists actively campaigned for the organisation of protests against Jewish pogroms in Amsterdam, supported the shipbuilding workers' strike of 17 February 1941 against the deportation of workers to Germany, which ended in victory for the workers.

The Communists carried out extensive work, fraught with great

danger, to organise a mass political strike in Amsterdam. The strike took place on 25 February 1941 and became an important landmark of the Dutch Resistance, one of the first mass political strikes in occupied Western Europe. More than 300,000 workers of Amsterdam and other towns of northern Holland and Utrecht took part. The strike laid the groundwork for the fighting unity of workers belonging to different political parties and of different religious convictions.

In autumn 1941 the Communist Party organised fighting groups for active armed struggle against the invaders. The Hitlerites responded by intensifying punitive measures against the Communists, many of whom were arrested and executed. In March 1943, armed Resistance groups raided the registry offices in Amsterdam and destroyed all population records. In spring 1945, the Communists established contact with an insurgent battalion of Soviet prisoners-of-war on the island of Texel and helped them with food and ammunition.

The working class and Communists of Holland made the greatest sacrifices in the anti-fascist struggle. In 1943, the occupying powers arrested and executed L. Jansen, J. Ditters, and other Party leaders. Practically the entire Political Bureau perished, and over half the Party membership. The Communists' devoted struggle against the German invaders considerably strengthened the Party's position and won it great political respect within the country.

In *Norway*, the Resistance movement began to emerge in the second half of 1940. The core and leading force of the Norwegian Resistance was the working class led by the Communist Party of Norway (NKP). In August 1940 the NKP Central Committee published a call for unity of the working class.

The greatest contribution to the organisation of mass actions by the workers against the invaders was made by Communists who worked underground.

On 9 April 1941, the first anniversary of the German invasion of Norway, workers throughout the country stopped work for half-an-hour. On 1 May 1941 an anti-fascist demonstration was held in Oslo.

After Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, the Resistance movement in Norway became more active. In September 1941 strikes erupted which involved 25,000 workers. The Hitlerite authorities responded by declaring a state of emergency in Oslo and other cities and introduced drumhead court martials.

More than 2,000 members of the Norwegian Resistance perished during the occupation. Many anti-fascists—union leaders and members of the Norwegian Labour Party, and the Communist Party—fell victim to repression. Leading Communists died, among them the Party's General Secretary H. Christiansen, the Central Committee Organising Secretary Ottar Lie and the leader of the Young Commu-

nist League A. Gauslo. In all, 21 Central Committee members perished.¹

However, the massacres perpetrated by the Hitlerites did not break the morale of the Resistance fighters. The nazi attempt to create a "Corporate Fascist State" in Norway met with failure. Workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals—all boycotted fascist-controlled trade unions and in 1942 countered them by creating illegal labour organisations. Communists took part in the underground union centre and helped strengthen the unity of the working class and raise its militancy. The underground Norwegian press, whose core was Communist publications, issued 300 different titles, with a circulation of up to 200,000 copies.²

Towards the end of 1943 the Communists put forward the slogan of general transition to armed struggle against the invaders and their accomplices, the quislings. Several partisan units were formed in the mountainous areas and on the west coast.

The development of the partisan struggle hampered the activity of the organisations of the bourgeois-reformist Home Front set up in 1941-1942. The military organisation Milorg and the civilian Coordination Committee were members of this Front. The leadership of the Home Front advocated mainly peaceful methods of struggle, such as civil disobedience.

However, the rank-and-file members of the mass underground organisations responded to the Communist calls for action. In 1943, fighting units led in the main by Communists carried out a number of successful actions against the occupying forces. These actions were supported by Milorg rank-and-file organisations. The Communist group Osvald (A. Sunde) blew up the labour force registry in Oslo, thus blocking the "total mobilisation" of Norwegian citizens on the work front. Through the united efforts of the Norwegian Resistance, the Hitlerites were unable to mobilise young people for the Eastern Front at the beginning of 1944.

In the last months of the war armed groups of the Communist Party joined with Milorg units. From then on the intensity of partisan actions against the Hitlerites increased significantly. Large-scale sabotage on railways in the spring of 1945 held up the transfer of Hitler troops from northern Norway to other fronts. In 1945 the Norwegian underground army numbered some 40,000.³ Norwegian police units made up of patriots sent over to Sweden totalled about 14,000

¹ *Norsk militært tidskrift*, 1971, No. 11, p. 531; *Norges historie*, Vol. 13, Oslo, 1979, p. 393.

² E. Lorenz, *Arbeiderbevegelsens historie. 1930-1973*, Oslo, 1975, p. 90.

³ See A. S. Kan, *A History of the Scandinavian Countries*, Moscow, 1980, p. 229 (in Russian).

in the second half of 1944.¹ Soviet POWs escaping from concentration camps were active fighters in the Norwegian Resistance.

After the liberation of northern Norway by the Red Army the Resistance movement noticeably increased its activities. Even the leadership of the Home Front began to call for action against the occupying forces. As a consequence of joint Resistance actions in spring 1945, work in transport and ordnance factories was halted. On 8 May 1945 the fascist troops in Norway capitulated. A government was formed in June which included members of the Resistance movement, two Communists among them.

In *Denmark* the struggle against the invaders was led by the Communist Party, which from June 1941 onwards worked underground. From autumn 1940 Danish Communists negotiated with representatives of the bourgeois wing of the Resistance. During the winter of 1940-1941 a Study Group commenced functioning, actually the first illegal group which included representatives of the Communist, Social Democratic and Conservative parties. In 1942 this organisation started publishing the newspaper *Frit Danmark*.

As distinct from the bourgeois participants of the Resistance who wished to limit their activities to passive resistance, the Communists were for developing active struggle, including armed actions. They organised the first armed groups in autumn 1941. In February 1942 a large-scale armed organisation, the Communist Partisans (KOPA) developed from the merger of several groups. Foremost among the members and organisers of KOPA were worker Communists, former members of the International Brigades in Spain. A united fighting organisation called Civilian Partisans (BOPA) was formed in the winter of 1942-1943. The majority of the fighters of this armed group were workers; anti-fascist students and representatives of intellectuals also joined BOPA. After the Battle of Stalingrad, the Resistance movement grew in strength, above all the sabotage activities of BOPA.

Strikes organised by the Communists started in February 1943. During the strikes there were clashes between the troops and the people, and throughout the country thousands-strong workers' meetings took place.

The Hitlerites took over full control in Denmark on 29 August 1943. Arrests followed and leading Resistance fighters were taken hostage. The Danish army was disarmed and temporarily interned. All these events radically altered the situation in the country. The Resistance, whose moving force was the working class led by the Communist Party, grew into a broad mass struggle against the occupy-

¹ O. Riste and B. Nökleby, *Norway 1940-45: The Resistance Movement*, Oslo, 1970, p. 83.

ing forces. On 16 September 1943, on Communist initiative, a united national command of the Resistance, the Council for Freedom, was set up whose members included Communists, Social Democrats and representatives of the anti-fascist bourgeoisie.

In November 1943, the Danish army joined the Resistance movement, and a military committee was formed within the Council for Freedom. By autumn 1944 the underground Resistance army numbered nearly 23,000, and by spring of the following year it had increased to more than 42,000. In 1943 the number of acts of sabotage in industry increased six-fold as compared with the first three years of the occupation, and their total number in 1943 was 969 as compared with 151 in 1940-42.¹

A general strike took place in Copenhagen from 30 June to 4 July 1944 which spread to other towns in the country. The strike demonstrated the strength of the working class, which was supported by broad sections of the population, as well as showing the growing support for the Communist Party.

On 15 August 1944, in response to the call of the Communists and the Council for Freedom, another general strike broke out in Copenhagen as a sign of protest against the murder by the Nazis of eleven hostages, fighters of the Resistance. The unrest spread to other towns in Denmark. Partisan units were very active, blowing up power stations, railway lines and fuel stores. In 1944 there were more than 300 acts of sabotage on the railways, and in the first four months of 1945 they numbered 1,300.²

The courage of the Communists during the Resistance years earned them high respect of the people. Towards the end of the war, the membership of the Communist Party of Denmark reached 50,000,³ a five-fold increase on the pre-war period. This reflected the role of Communists as leaders in the anti-fascist Resistance.

In *Austria* various sections of the population took part in the Resistance movement. Monarchists created groups which propagated the idea of struggle for a "Great Austria" under the sceptre of the Hapsburg dynasty. Groups of Catholics supported the restoration of Austrian independence and the order established by the fascist regime of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. Both these tendencies were reactionary and could only divert part of the population from the genuine anti-fascist struggle. These organisations did not last long: they were disbanded as early as 1938-39, having been able only to recruit some membership and start fund-raising activities.

Groups of Socialists endeavoured to organise a struggle to liqui-

¹ See Yu. V. Kudrina, *Denmark in the Years of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 159, 176, 125.

² A. S. Kan, *A History of the Scandinavian Countries*, p. 233.

³ Yu. V. Kudrina, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

date the fascist regime and restore bourgeois democracy. Some of them saw their activities not as the struggle for Austrian independence, but one for a revolution throughout the German empire; others sided with the Communists in the fight for a new, revolutionary democracy. However, a considerable number of Social Democrats were confused by Renner's statement in support of the Anschluss on the eve of the plebiscite on 10 April 1938. Renner called on them to vote for the Anschluss carried out by Hitler Germany.

The Socialist organisations were tracked down by the Nazis fairly quickly. The group of the socialist teacher Johan Otto Haas survived the longest; it had units in many areas and conducted active anti-fascist propaganda not only in Austria, but in towns in Germany such as Munich, Augsburg and others. Haas' organisation was uncovered in 1942 and over 200 members of the underground arrested. Many perished in prisons, many were executed, including Haas, Edward Get and the Brunners.

Communists led the Resistance movement, proposing a clear-cut goal—the restoration of an independent Austria on a genuinely democratic basis. During the first years they worked under the leadership of the underground operational centre of the Communist Party Central Committee. However, until the entry of the USSR into the Second World War passive forms of resistance predominated. The workers protested against the introduction of new wage systems, there were isolated anti-fascist actions of dispersed groups, and draft dodging.

From the summer of 1941 the struggle against the fascists intensified, although in view of the fierce terror it proved impossible to create a new operations centre. During the second half of 1941 strikes took place in Vienna and in Wiener Neustadt, while sabotage was also carried out in arms factories and on the railways.

A conference was held in the mountains in October 1942 at which 40 representatives of various sections of the population gathered. The conference decided to set up a Freedom Front. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria published an appeal calling the people to "a national struggle against Hitler and his war, for a free and independent Austria". The subsequent years saw an increased struggle. The fascist newspaper *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* admitted on 16 November 1943: "You will not find a single enterprise where industrial trouble is not to be found".

Towards the end of the war anti-fascist actions time and again developed into armed partisan struggle. In November 1944 the first Austrian battalion of freedom fighters was formed within the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army. This battalion was led by Franz Honner and Friedl Fűrberg, members of the CC of the CPA. It was in action until the end of the war. Figures of the sacrifices made by the peo-

ple are witness to the extent of the Austrian Resistance movement. 1,400 Communists were executed, including 13 members of the Central Committee, 4,280 Communists were thrown into concentration camps, several thousand into prisons, and apart from all this, from 1938 to 1945 another 1,300 patriots were executed, 16,493 were killed in concentration camps, 9,687 in Gestapo prisons, and 6,420 died in prisons of occupied countries.¹

Having driven the German fascists out, the Red Army helped the Austrian people to restore their statehood. A Provisional Government was formed on 27 April 1945. The country once again became an independent, sovereign state.

In *Italy* the anti-fascist Resistance movement was wide-ranging in scope. When the war started the ties between the anti-fascist underground and its centre abroad in Paris were broken. The underground structures of the anti-fascist parties and groups were temporarily destroyed. But in 1941, their reestablishment began. In July 1941 the first to rebuild its underground organisation was the Italian Communist Party (PCI). From the summer of 1942, the communist underground newspaper *L'Unita* once again appeared, and early in 1943, the underground centre of the Communist Party again became active. It had regular contact with Palmiro Togliatti (then in Moscow as the PCI representative in the Comintern). The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) rebuilt its underground network in the spring of 1942 and its newspaper *L'Avanti!* again started publication. The petty-bourgeois group Justice and Liberty became a strong force in the Left wing of the anti-fascist movement. At the end of 1942, it was reorganised into the Action Party. The majority of its members were students and intellectuals.

Thanks to the efforts of the Communists, from 1941 the process of consolidating the anti-fascist forces resumed. In Paris in autumn 1941, the Action Committee to unite all patriotic forces was set up. It included the PCI, the PSI and Justice and Liberty.

The united Left anti-fascist forces adopted a joint political programme in March 1943. The PCI, the PSI and the Party of Action agreed on preparations for a general uprising with the objective to overthrow the fascist dictatorship and withdraw Italy from the war. The left parties were of the opinion that fascism had to be replaced by a new democratic system, that the socio-economic and political forces which gave birth to fascism should be liquidated (finance capital, landlordism, the monarchy) and that the participation of the working people in administering the state should be guaranteed. The left parties also considered it essential to broaden the anti-fascist Resistance coalition by the inclusion of bourgeois elements.

¹ M. A. Poltavsky, *Diplomacy of Imperialism and the Smaller Countries of Europe (1938-1945)*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 74-84, 150, 216 (in Russian).

In Turin in 1942, and then in Rome and Milan, committees of the National Front were formed in which, in addition to the members of the Action Committee, representatives of bourgeois parties were included. Thus, a broad national anti-fascist front was created. The bourgeois parties which joined the anti-fascist Resistance movement, nevertheless, rejected the path of a popular uprising, came out against the development of mass struggle in the enterprises, and relied on changes in the upper echelons of government and support by Anglo-American forces.

The Communist Party, on the contrary, emphasised that only the combination of armed struggle with the wide involvement of the masses would guarantee the success of the Resistance movement. The conditions prevailing in the movement confirmed the correctness of this viewpoint.

From the beginning of 1942 a considerable strike movement began to develop. By the eve of 1943, economic strikes started to change over to ones with political dimensions. A general strike in northern Italy took place in March 1943 involving over 300,000 people.¹

Mass actions in industry were the most effective way to shake the fascist regime, bring other sections of the population into the struggle against it and prepare favourable political conditions for an anti-fascist uprising.

However, the lack of unity within the anti-fascist forces on methods of struggle made it impossible in the period under review to start preparing for an uprising. On 25 July 1943, therefore, a section of the ruling circles, in an endeavour to prevent an explosion from below, organised a "palace coup". Mussolini was removed, and the Badoglio military-monarchist regime was installed. On 3 September 1943, Italy signed the act of capitulation. Immediately following this, on 8-9 September, the larger part of the country, as far as Naples, was occupied by Hitler's troops. They set up a puppet regime, the so-called Republic of Saló, headed by Mussolini. Consequently, the anti-fascist movement in Italy entered a new phase—the armed national liberation and anti-fascist struggle of the people. The partisan movement grew, its main striking force was the Communist Garibaldi units commanded by a leader of the Communist Party, Luigi Longo.²

The Communists consistently strove for coordinated actions and the organisational unity of the various partisan units with differing political convictions. In June 1944 all these units joined together in the partisan army, the Corps of Volunteers of Freedom (*Corpo Volontari della Libertà—CVL*), under united command, with Luigi Longo playing a leading part. By March 1945 this Corps numbered

¹ U. Massola, *Marzo 1943 ore 10*, Rome, 1950.

² *Le brigate Garibaldi nella Resistenza*, Vols. 1-3, Milan, 1979.

150,000 men.¹ The political leadership of the Resistance movement during 1943-1945 was in the hands of the Committee for the National Liberation of Northern Italy (CLNAI), which at that time operated underground in Milan. Representatives of the left parties, including Communists, played an important part in this Committee.

The Italian Resistance movement was a broad anti-fascist movement incorporating different social strata—workers, peasants, intellectuals and the urban middle classes. The contribution made by the working class to the movement was of decisive significance. Industrial actions by the workers were an important aspect of the Resistance movement. The strike movement was well organised. The workers' struggle was directed by the underground trade union cells, united within the All-Italian Confederation of Labour (AICL), and factory action committees.

In March 1944 the whole country was involved in a general strike of more than a million workers.² Over 20,000 partisans assisted the strikers.³ The impact of the strike was enormous. It proved to be the prelude to Mussolini's final downfall, preparing the political conditions for a national uprising. After the March strikes a significant section of peasants and intellectuals started to adopt active anti-fascist attitudes. The organisation of a national armed uprising became simply a question of time. The strike also enormously influenced the course of the political struggle in southern Italy, and led to the formation in Salerno in April 1944 of the first anti-fascist coalition government of Pietro Badoglio, which included Socialists and Communists.

An important role in the formation of this government which reflected the wide political spectrum of the National Front was that of Palmiro Togliatti, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, who, towards the end of March 1944, had been able to return to Italy. In late March 1944, the Communist Party, at Togliatti's initiative, proposed an alliance of all anti-fascist forces for the defeat of fascism, leaving the questions of what form the government should take until the conclusion of the war. These matters could then be decided through a Constituent Assembly.

This opened the way to the creation of a democratic coalition government including representatives of the working class and to cooperation between the government and the CLNAI. Political conditions were ripe for a widespread growth of the partisan struggle and preparations for a national uprising. Bourgeois parties taking part in the

¹ L. Longo, *Un popolo alla macchia*, Verona, 1947, p. 385.

² L. Valiani, G. Bianchi, E. Ragionieri, *Azionisti cattolici e comunisti nella Resistenza*, Milan, 1971, p. 348.

³ See G. S. Filatov, *Italian Communists in the Resistance Movement*, Moscow, 1964, p. 96.

Resistance movement were compelled to support the idea of a national uprising.

The anti-fascist uprising in Italy was accomplished in the first instance through a number of local uprisings, and in the final stages through the Resistance movement on a national scale. Partisan and patriotic action groups (GAP and SAP) did much to guarantee the success of the uprising and the liberation of Tuscany and part of Emilia in the summer and autumn of 1944. Parallel with this, partisan zones appeared in the enemy's rear, "republics" controlled by the Committee for National Liberation.

In November 1944 the Anglo-American Command in Italy demanded the dissolution of partisan units. This demand was refused. The partisans, maintaining their organisation, continued to prepare for an uprising.¹ The final stage of their preparations, therefore, rested on a solid basis, with a plan worked out in every detail for the uprising. A general political strike started on 24 April 1945 and by the next day it had become a national uprising led by the working class. The factories of the industrial centres of the North were taken over by the workers and became the outposts of the insurgents. In those days in Turin, for example, in industries from 80 to 90 per cent of the workers and employees occupied their enterprises.² The armed workers of the Gruppi d'Azione Patriottica (GAP) took part in street fighting against the nazis. Workers made up the core of the partisan units.³ During the uprising more than 100 towns were liberated, including Turin, Genoa, Milan, Bologna; 250,000 partisans took part in insurgent activities in that period.⁴

The uprising was the natural result of the Communists' long struggle and their educational and organisational work among the masses. The puppet fascist regime of the Salò Republic was overthrown. Mussolini was shot on the verdict of the Supreme Command of the CVL. The whole of Italy was liberated from the Hitlerites. In the liberated areas power was in the hands of the CLN. In accordance with a CLNAI decree of 25 April 1945,⁵ Workers' Committees were established in the factories which workers had occupied. The administrative apparatus was being cleared of fascist elements. Exceedingly important socio-political aims of the Resistance movement, the establishment of a republic and the adoption of a democratic constitution, were achieved during the course of the subsequent political battle within the country.

¹ *La Resistenza europea e gli Alleati*, Milan, 1962.

² P. Secchia, *Aldo dice: 26 X 1. Chronistoria del 25 aprile 1945*, Milan, 1963, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴ L. Longo, *Un popolo alla macchia*, p. 428.

⁵ *Documenti ufficiali del CLNAI*, Milan, 1945, p. 21.

By the start of the Second World War the anti-fascist movement in Germany had been considerably weakened as a result of harsh repression. During the war, 200,000 German anti-fascists fell victim to the fascist terror. Of the 300,000 members of the Communist Party of Germany in 1933, 150,000 were persecuted, imprisoned, or thrown into concentration camps, tens of thousands of Communists were murdered.¹ Ernst Thälmann, an outstanding leader of the German and international working-class movement, was murdered on 18 August 1944 in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The main task of the German anti-fascist Resistance was to fight for an end to the aggressive war and the overthrow of the Hitler regime. The Political Platform of the Communist Party of Germany² adopted on 30 December 1939, outlined the way to cope with the task. The Communist Party was the sole political force in the country which consistently worked for a united working-class movement and the creation of a broad Popular Front in the struggle for peace, democratic freedoms and the social demands of the German people, against fascist dictatorship and the monopolies, for a free, democratic and peace-loving Germany.³

In working for the development of a mass anti-fascist movement, the Communists restored their Party organisations, established contacts in the anti-fascist underground in order to consolidate the forces opposing Hitler's regime, and create a single leading centre of the Resistance, distributed Party documents and conducted propaganda work. Inside Germany in 1940 they managed to restore an operational leadership for underground Party work.

The German Social Democrats were not united in their attitude to the war and the anti-fascist struggle. The newspaper which the SPD established abroad, *Der Neue Vorwärts*, wrote on 10 September 1939: "Hitler and his regime bear the entire burden of blame for the monstrous crime committed against the whole world and humanity... Therefore, our aim is to fight together with all the democratic forces in Europe for Hitler's overthrow."⁴ However, the right-wing leaders of the SPD, who continued to take an anti-communist and anti-Soviet stance, in practice did nothing to organise resistance in Germany. Their attitude was opposed by a section of the membership living abroad. The Neue Beginnen group, the Socialist Labour Party (SA) and the Revolutionary Socialists in Holland openly dissociated themselves from the anti-communism of the right.

Despite the passivity of the SPD leaders, many Social Democrats

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, Berlin, 1966, p. 436.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 532-35.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 550-53.

⁴ P. Grasmann, *Sozialdemokraten gegen Hitler 1933-1945*, Munich-Vienna, 1976, pp. 33-34.

in Germany joined the struggle. A section of the Party functionaries joined the bourgeois opposition, relying on the possibility of a military conspiracy. On the other hand, a Social Democratic underground did exist inside Germany. The sections of the SPD involved in active resistance, increasingly collaborated with anti-fascist organisations led by the Communist Party and in a number of instances merged with them.

The core of the anti-fascist Resistance was the working class led by its revolutionary vanguard. Already in the early days of the war, the Dortmund workers advanced the "Go Slow" slogan which became the main one in the struggle in the arms industry.¹ Answering the Communist call to do everything possible to impede the arms production, anti-fascists in the factories worked out their forms of struggle: refusal to do overtime or additional work, absenteeism "for health reasons", sabotage, production of defective goods, etc. 14 thousand workers were punished during the first half of 1943 for breaches of labour discipline. During the war there were strikes of short duration, mainly of a socio-economic nature. 18,900 German workers were arrested from January to September 1943, for taking part in strikes.²

The key question for the Resistance movement, unity of the working class, was being solved during the struggle against fascism and war. In the Ruhr Region, in Berlin, Nuremberg and other cities, anti-fascist groups operated in which Communists and Social Democrats fought side by side. In the factories, united front committees were formed, bringing together Social Democrats and Communists.

The efforts of the KPD to achieve unity of the anti-fascist forces drew into the ranks of the Resistance representatives of other sections of the German people—progressive intellectuals, anti-Hitler bourgeoisie, military personnel and religious people. An example of such cooperation was the anti-fascist organisation led by Harro Schulze-Boysen and Arvid von Harnack.

German anti-fascists considered work among prisoners-of-war, inmates of concentration camps and foreign workers, to be of paramount importance. On the initiative of Communists underground international committees were formed in Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Dachau, Mauthausen, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen concentration camps.

Towards the end of 1942, as a result of the Communist Party's policy of a united workers' front and work for the creation of a broad popular front, centres for Party work and anti-fascist struggle in

¹ D. Peukert, *Ruhrarbeiter gegen den Faschismus. Dokumentation über den Widerstand im Ruhrgebiet 1933-1945*, Frankfurt/Main, 1976, pp. 266-67.

² *Faschismusforschung. Positionen, Probleme, Polemik*, Berlin, 1980, p. 344.

large regions were established. The activities of such organisations as those led by Robert Uhrig and by Schulze-Boysen and Harnack in Berlin, by Bernhard Bästlein, Franz Jacob and Robert Abshagen in Pomerania, by Georg Schumann, Otto Engert and Kurt Kresse in Leipzig, by Theodor Neubauer and Magnus Poser in Thuringia, and by Georg Lechleiter in Mannheim, were all examples of how, on the basis of a united workers' front, the Communist Party carried out in practice the People's Front policy for ending the war, overthrowing the fascist dictatorship, saving the nation. In 1943 the Anton Saefkow group based in Berlin functioned as the Party leadership. In autumn, the all-German operational leadership, responsible to the KPD Central Committee, began to take shape.

The activities of the Free Germany National Committee (NFD) were part of the growing anti-fascist front, diverse in its political and social composition. The Committee was formed in the USSR in July 1943 on the initiative of the Communist Party. It included workers, peasants, officers and intellectuals; among them were Communists, Social Democrats and Christians. The proletarian poet Erich Weinert was elected its Chairman and among the members were the Chairman of the KPD Central Committee Wilhelm Pieck, and the Central Committee members A. Ackerman, Walter Ulbricht and V. Florin. The "Manifesto of the Free Germany National Committee to the Wehrmacht and the German People" adopted at its founding conference, envisaged its main political task to be the establishment of an anti-fascist, democratic system in Germany.¹ This programme was supported by the Union of German officers, formed in September 1943 by German prisoners-of-war. In the spring of 1945 the Union numbered 4,000 officers and generals.

With the founding of the NFD and the rise of a Free Germany movement in the country and abroad, the way was clear for a broad alliance of German anti-fascists and patriots from all classes, the guiding force being the Communist Party of Germany. German Communists were faced with the task of transforming the Free Germany movement into a broad national front of struggle against Hitlerism. The political platform "We Communists and the Free Germany National Committee"² adopted in spring 1944 in the main coincided with the demands and slogans of the NFD.

Despite brutal fascist terror and chauvinist hysteria, the anti-fascist movement in Germany grew. By the spring of 1944, the operational leadership of the Communist Party had well organised and actively operating bases in over 30 towns and villages of Brandenburg province, 18 towns in Saxony and Saxony Anhalt and 37

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 5, pp. 575-78.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 594-98.

towns in Thuringia. There were 10,000 active anti-fascists working under its direct leadership.¹

The final shots of the war could still be heard, when anti-fascists were already engaged in restoring the country to a democratic system of government. Organs of democratic power arose in the liberated territories. The anti-fascists seized power in Eisleben even before the Allied troops entered the town. In the Ruhr region, from the very first days of liberation, the anti-fascist committees, trade union groups and Communist Party organisations commenced working to bring life back to normal. Organs of the new power arose in Mid-Germany, Bavaria and in Pomerania. The leaders of the Communist Party and the Free Germany National Committee returned to Germany on 30 April 1945.

The Hitler regime collapsed under the blows of the Red Army. The victory gained by the freedom-loving peoples during the Second World War became an important prerequisite for the rooting out of fascism, militarism and imperialism from the soil of Germany. This enabled the working class led by its vanguard to commence the revolutionary transformation of society.

On 22 June 1941, the ruling circles of *Finland* dragged the country into war against the USSR, on the side of Hitler Germany. The Communist Party in its appeal to the people in October 1941 called on them to fight against the reactionary government, frustrate the plans of the German and Finnish military, and help the just war of the Soviet people. The appeal stimulated the anti-fascist struggle. Desertions from the army increased and sabotage in the factories grew. Although the leadership of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, headed by V. Tanner, supported the war, anti-war sentiments grew within its ranks.

The first defeats of the fascist troops on the Soviet-German front strengthened the anti-fascist feelings of the working people. The leadership of the National Association of Finnish Trade Unions (NAFTU) under pressure from the workers approached the government in 1943 with a proposal that it explore the possibilities of Finland opting out of the war.

Support for putting an end to the war was in evidence among members of some bourgeois parties: the Swedish People's Party, the Agrarian Union and the Progressive Party. These views were shared by the outstanding leader of the Agrarian Union, U. Kekkonen.

In September 1944, Finland signed an armistice with the Soviet Union according to which, among other points, patriotic anti-fascists would be released from prisons and concentration camps, and the Communist Party and other progressive parties would be allowed to

¹ *Deutsche Geschichte*, Vol. 3, Berlin, 1968, p. 364.

function. At a mass meeting the Communist Party held in November 1944, the first of this kind since 1917, the Party's outstanding leader Ville Pessi stated: "The people of Finland are on the threshold of a new epoch. It depends on us as to the kind of conditions that will emerge in the country." Finland's withdrawal from the war and the democratisation of the internal political life of the country created favourable conditions for the development of the workers' movement.

The working class in the neutral countries also contributed to the world-wide struggle against fascism, for democracy and social progress.

A government of "national unity" was formed in *Sweden* in December 1939, led by the Social Democrat P. A. Hansson. A number of emergency laws were promulgated limiting the democratic freedoms in the country. Communist and anti-fascist publications were frequently confiscated, and leaders of progressive periodicals were prosecuted. Communists were forbidden to hold leading positions in trade unions or to work in state institutions.

At the same time the government connived at the formation of fascist organisations. Swedish nazis served in the police force and frequently fascist meetings and rallies were protected by the guardians of law and order. Pressurised by the Germans, the Swedish government often failed to observe strict neutrality. Military personnel and supplies from Germany to Norway passed through Swedish territory, and limitations on Swedish-German trade were removed, thanks to which Germany was able to satisfy part of its requirement of strategic supplies.

The Communist Party of Sweden held a consistent anti-fascist position, defending the democratic and economic rights of the working class and demanding that the government observe strict neutrality. In July 1941, the Party published in its newspaper *Ny Dag* an appeal to workers: "Demand that the government yields no more to German pressure!

"Demand that the use of Swedish territory and Swedish transport should be the responsibility only of the Swedish authorities, and in the interests of the Swedish people!

"Demand that the country's resources should only be used for the defence of its national independence and freedom."¹

These calls met with wide response from the working class which was in the forefront of mass actions. From the autumn of 1942 a protest campaign developed throughout the country against the transit of German troops on Swedish railways. The turning-point in the Great Patriotic War contributed to the growth of anti-fascist

¹ S. Linderot, *Svensk arbetarrörelse i brytningstid. Tal och skrifter i urval*, Stockholm, 1949, p. 293.

feelings. The demands for strict observance by Sweden of its neutrality and for helping countries fighting fascist subjugation, became stronger. Bowing to this pressure, the government agreed that as from 1943 preparation of units for the Resistance forces in Norway and Denmark would take place, and in 1944 arms for Resistance forces in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries were secretly transported through Sweden. During the war there were nearly 200,000 refugees in Sweden, including 43,000 Norwegians and 18,000 Danes, saved from the savagery of fascist occupation.¹

Despite the efforts of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party and of the National Confederation of Trade Unions, strikes continued to occur in Sweden during the war years. In 1939-1944, as a result of strikes and lockouts a yearly average of nearly 94.8 thousand working days were lost.² A strike of metal workers started in February 1945. It involved 130,000 workers and continued for 5 months. The Communist Party played a leading role in this major action of the Swedish working class.

Influenced by the victories of the Soviet Union, and as a result of the growth of anti-fascist sentiments and strengthening of the prestige of the Communist Party, towards the end of the war a leftward trend was to be discerned among the masses. The elections of 1944 highlighted the increasing influence of the Communist Party with it receiving 318.5 thousand votes, or 10.3 per cent, 3 times more than in 1940. Hence the number of their deputies in the second chamber of the Riksdag increased from 3 to 15. From June 1940 to May 1944, the membership of the Communist Party increased from 11,200 to 21,234, that is nearly two-fold.³

In *Switzerland*, under the pretext of not wishing to "annoy Hitler" the ruling circles took the line of curtailing the democratic gains and social rights of the working people. Emergency laws were passed, censorship was introduced, meetings were banned and a political police force established. On 27 November 1940 all activities of the Communist Party were banned, its press was closed down, and Communists were expelled from local government bodies. The left-wing Socialist Federation formed in 1939 was disbanded in 1941.

Nevertheless, the Communists and left Socialists continued their fight. They went underground, published newspapers, distributed leaflets, organised meetings of working people, aroused the class consciousness of the Swiss workers and drew them into the struggle

¹ U. Torell, *Hjälp. till Danmark. Militära och politiska förbindelser, 1943-1945*, Stockholm, 1973, p. 36.

² T. Karlbohm, *Den svenska fackföreningsrörelsen*, Stockholm, 1955, p. 372.

³ J. Hirdman, *Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti 1939-1945*, Stockholm, 1974, pp. 8, 276; H. Kjellvard, *Arbetsrörelsen i Sverige. Kortfattad historisk och statistisk översikt*, Stockholm, 1962, p. 134.

against the pro-German orientation of the ruling circles. They fought against arms, ammunition, and equipment deliveries to Germany, against the Swiss nazis, and against handing over anti-fascist refugees from other countries to the German authorities.

The dissatisfaction of the workers and the turn of fortune in the Second World War forced the Swiss bourgeoisie to change their policy. In October 1944 the ban on Communist Party and Socialist Federation activities was lifted, the discriminatory and repressive measures against the anti-fascist movement ceased. On 14-15 August 1944 a founding congress of the Swiss Labour Party was held in Zurich. Communists and left Socialists were the nucleus of the new party. These changes in the internal political life of the country created conditions for the post-war upsurge of the working-class movement.

During the war years, the *Irish* government adopted a policy of neutrality. According to the leader of Fianna Fail, this was due to the unwillingness of the Irish people to fight alongside Great Britain which was responsible for the division of Ireland. This attitude was bound up with national traditions and took into account anti-British feelings. But it ignored the anti-fascist character of the Second World War, positioning Ireland outside the struggle.

However, during the war a number of working-class actions took place due to the worsening of economic conditions, new government measures to regulate wages, and its interference in trade union activities.

In 1941, the wage freeze decision and an act on the mandatory merger and registration of trade unions aroused the widespread dissatisfaction of the workers. There were demonstrations and meetings on the streets of Dublin and other cities. The opposition to the government's actions was supported by the internationalist wing of the Irish Trade Union Congress. A special conference held in 1941 as well as the annual congress in 1942 spoke out against the government's measures.

So far as the policy adopted by the leadership of the Irish Labour Party was concerned, opportunist tendencies noticeably strengthened. In 1940 the words "Workers' Republic" were deleted from the Party Constitution by the leadership—a slogan which had existed since the days of James Connolly.¹ In 1939, representatives of the Labour Party took part in a venture initiated by Irish clerics—the working out of a plan to create a corporate state based on the Portuguese model. On the excuse of upholding neutrality, the Labour and trade union leaders refused to adopt a resolution condemning German fascism.

¹ J. Hawkins, *The Irish Question Today*, London, 1941, pp. 13-14.

At the 1944 Irish Trade Union Congress held in Drogheda a resolution was adopted to take part in the conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions scheduled for early 1945. However, the right-wing trade union leaders, opposing this decision, opted for a split. Thus, in 1945, 10 trade unions "of pure Irish descent" decided to organise their own trade union Congress. The split in 1945 was a severe blow to the unity of the working-class movement. The newly formed Irish Trade Union Congress immediately received government support.¹

In *Spain*, under the most difficult conditions of a terrorist dictatorship, opposition to Franco continued. Partisan units which had come into being during the Civil War were still active in Andalusia, Valencia, Aragon, Galicia, Asturias and the centre of the country. Of all the opposition parties, only the Communist Party of Spain supported these units by all the means available to it. The existence of these units, at times tragic, was one of the factors in the political instability of the regime preventing Franco from taking part in the war on Hitler's side.

In almost all the large towns there were nuclei of former political parties. The underground organisations of varying political trends were not linked with each other: the old differences of the Civil War days were not forgotten, and this lessened the effectiveness of their fight. The Communist Party was the most successful in building underground organisations. With the beginning of the Second World War the Communist Party endeavoured to unite not only opponents of the dictatorship, but all those who were against Spain's involvement in the war, and it put forward the slogan of consistent neutrality.

In August 1941 the Communist Party Central Committee issued a manifesto in which it called for action to prevent Spain becoming an accomplice of German imperialism in its war against the Soviet Union. In September 1942 it again called for opposition against all forms of collaboration with Germany: "The importance of the present period obliges us to wipe away the differences, the hatred and passions that have separated us until now ... and save our people from the war and destruction into which Franco and his Falangists want to plunge them."²

From 1943 onwards the anti-Franco opposition became a mass phenomenon. The Communist Party time and again was able to publish the illegal *Mundo Obrero* and, in addition, *Verdad* in Valencia, and *Unidad* in Malaga. Gradually other anti-Franco forces became active.

For the thousands and thousands of Spanish Republicans who had

¹ *Irish Times*, 6 July 1945.

² *Historia del Partido Comunista de España (versión abreviada)*, op. cit., p. 222.

crossed the Franco-Spanish border that tragic spring of 1939 the fight against fascism had not ended then, many of them were actively involved wherever fate had sent them.

Spanish Republicans took part in many battles during the Second World War. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, hundreds of Spanish Republicans who had found refuge in the Soviet Union volunteered for the Red Army. Spanish Republicans were to be found everywhere—in the defence of Moscow and Leningrad, the Battle of Stalingrad, the fighting in the Crimea, and among Dmitri Medvedev's famous partisan units. 723 were awarded Soviet orders and medals.¹

More than a thousand Spanish volunteers fought at Narvik; former members of the Republican Army fought at Dunkirk, in General Leclerc's division in Africa and also in Crete. Spaniards joined in the Belgian and Italian Resistance movements. Their participation in the French Resistance was particularly impressive with about 4,000 Spaniards involved.² Of the 300-500 thousand Spanish Republicans outside Spain, every 12th fell in battle against German fascism.³

In fascist *Portugal* which had declared itself to be neutral, the conditions of the workers were extremely severe. High prices and lack of rights resulted in strong anti-government feelings among the people. In the summer of 1942 there were mass strikes in Lisbon and thousands of workers took to the streets. The second wave of strikes engulfed the country in the summer of 1943, when the secretariat of the Portuguese Communist Party functioned as the strike committee.

In November 1943 the 3rd Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party, held in underground, decided to work for the establishment of a united anti-fascist front. After the Congress an underground movement for national anti-fascist unity was formed, which included Communists, Socialists, bourgeois republicans and a number of other opposition groupings. The anti-fascist forces became especially active on the eve of and after the defeat of nazi Germany. In May 1945 there was a wave of mass demonstrations of protest against the dictatorship in Portugal.

THE WORKING CLASS OF THE USA, BRITAIN, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA IN THE WAR AGAINST THE FASCIST BLOC

The USA and Great Britain had no option but to enter into a coalition with the USSR, since they all faced a common enemy which could not be overcome without the decisive participation of the USSR. In addition, the policy of the two countries was greatly influ-

¹ *Libro Blanco. Resistencia española al fascismo*, pp. 32-35.

² A. Fernandez, *La España de maquis*, Milan, 1967, pp. 9-17.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

enced by an exceedingly important factor (especially in conditions of war), namely the pressure by the British and American people for unity with the USSR. The emergence of the anti-Hitler coalition dealt a serious blow to the fascist aggressors' plans to split the unity of the peace-loving peoples. However, the ruling circles of the Western powers, guided by their self-interest and anti-communist prejudices, were slow to act against the countries of the fascist bloc, preferring to preserve their strength for the final stages of the war when, according to their calculations, the mutual exhaustion of the USSR and Germany would allow them to dictate their conditions for the post-war shape of the world. On the contrary, the proletariat of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition was the most consistent supporter of energetic measures being taken against the fascist powers.

Coming out as a firm defender of freedom and independence, the working class in Britain and the USA won considerable respect from all sections of society. At the same time, the heroic resistance of the Soviet people to the fascist hordes helped to debunk many anti-Soviet myths, strengthening the understanding by the people of the nature of the socialist system and the sources of its power.

During the war steps were taken by the governments of Great Britain and the USA to ensure strict regulation of industrial relations. In June 1940 in Great Britain, the National Joint Advisory Council, which included representatives of the Employers' Federation and the trade unions, worked out an agreement whereby conflicts were to be settled by negotiation, and in the event of failure, the solution of the problems was to be handed over to the newly formed National Arbitration Tribunal. To this was added Order No. 1305 which pronounced strikes and lockouts to be illegal.¹ In the USA a national conference of representatives of trade unions and employers in Washington on 17-23 December 1941, undertook a reciprocal commitment: for the workers to avoid strikes, for the employers to avoid lockouts, and for the conflicts which might arise to be settled by negotiations. On 12 January 1942 a National War Council for Labour was set up, whose function was to apply compulsory arbitration.

These measures assisted in the build-up of military capability in the countries of the anti-fascist coalition. The workers accepted serious inroads into their conditions, agreeing to a longer working day, intensification of labour, and the banning of strikes, etc. The efforts of the Communist parties and a number of trade unions to develop war production, helped to increase the contribution being made to the struggle against the common enemy and aid to the Soviet people, who had to bear the brunt of the fascist attack. In the factories fulfilling war orders for the Soviet Union workers were unsparing in their

¹ A. Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-1945*, London, 1969, pp. 115-16.

efforts and the trade unions worked out special programmes to ensure the most effective production. In Great Britain, for instance, in September 1941, a special week was devoted to the production of tanks for Russia, during which the workers voluntarily worked longer hours.

At the same time, the employers, taking advantage of the war situation which guaranteed government orders, intensified labour to the utmost and made huge profits. In the USA, for example, the average annual profit for the period 1940-1945 (after tax deductions) was almost 8.7 billion dollars whereas earlier in autumn 1936-1939 it had amounted to 3.3 billion.¹

In *Great Britain* the workers were for strengthening cooperation with the USSR and for greater participation by the British armed forces in the common struggle against the fascist aggressors.

The statement of the Communist Party published on 23 June 1941 called for an agreement with the USSR, and for unity of actions by the working class and all patriotic forces.² Delegations from a number of working-class organisations visited the Soviet Embassy in London to express their solidarity and desire for unity with the Soviet people. Mass meetings expressing similar sentiments were held in London, Manchester and Bristol. In August 1941, British miners took the initiative in what later became a broad public campaign in many countries of the anti-fascist coalition, namely, a gift to a sum of £ 70,000 from the Miners' Federation of Great Britain to the Soviet people. Direct contacts between Soviet and British trade unions were established, and an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee was set up.

The most effective help to the Soviet Union would have been timely and full-scale military actions by the USA and Great Britain in Western Europe. This, as is well known, did not materialise either in 1942 or 1943, despite firm agreement to do so. Public opinion in the West was considerably influenced by the attitudes of the opponents of the Second Front among both the bourgeois politicians and ideologists and the right-wing reformist leaders.³

All the more commendable, therefore, was the service rendered by the working class and democratic movement which developed an active struggle for an early opening of the Second Front. There were thousands-strong meetings held in London and other cities supporting the demand to open the Second Front. Soviet public organisations and the Red Army received letters from British workers expressing readiness to assist directly in the common struggle. A traditionally British petition campaign was organised, during which delegations

¹ *The Economic Almanac 1960*, New York, 1960, p. 418.

² *Daily Worker*, 23 June 1941.

³ W. P. and Z. K. Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, Vol. II, London, 1958, p. 27.

representing 350 constituencies went to Parliament to present petitions calling for the immediate opening of the Second Front. Trade union activists, shop stewards and trade union branches all supported this call.

The active struggle of the workers and democratic masses for the opening of the Second Front and greater support for the Soviet Union had quite an influence on the ruling circles, and countered the manoeuvres of the reactionary forces, who were endeavouring to weaken the war efforts of the countries belonging to the anti-fascist coalition.

Meanwhile, the victories of the Red Army awakened the interest and sympathies of many people towards the Soviet Union and helped to strengthen the prestige of the working-class movement and of the Communist Party. The growing influence of the Communist Party forced the British government in August 1942 to lift the ban on its paper, the *Daily Worker*, whose circulation soon reached 100,000 daily. In 1943, the TUC General Council withdrew the veto on Communists being elected to leading positions in the trade unions, and in 1944 a Communist, A. Papworth, was elected to the General Council.

At the 7th Congress of the Communist Party in October 1944 a programme for democratic change was presented for discussion, and a call made for the creation of a united working-class front. Although this call was rejected by the leadership of the Labour Party, it was warmly welcomed by the working class and democratic masses. The Labour leaders were forced to take into account the growing left feelings in the working-class movement. The Labour Party programme adopted in April 1945 recognised the need to preserve cooperation with the Soviet Union and to fulfill a number of democratic reforms, which included the nationalisation of some industries.

In the *United States* the organisation of mass support for active participation in the war against Hitler Germany was complicated by the fact that the majority of the working class were influenced by the right-wing trade union leaders and isolationist feelings were prevalent. The commencement of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people stimulated the growth of the anti-fascist movement in the USA. On 23 June 1941, the Communist Party of the USA published a declaration which called for full support and cooperation with the USSR. At an extraordinary plenum on 28 June its National Committee adopted a call to the people which stated: "It is the duty of the working class to lead the fight to establish American-Soviet-British collaboration for the defeat of Hitlerism and to make this the official and active policy of the government."¹

¹ *Daily Worker*, 30 June 1941.

Towards the end of June 1941 the leadership of the Congress of Industrial Organisations passed a resolution in favour of giving all-out support to the Soviet Union. Mass meetings held in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and other cities all expressed solidarity with the Soviet people. "The popular demand became overwhelming that the Soviet Union be given every form of assistance,"¹ stated Sumner Welles, US Under-Secretary of State. Isolationism was dealt a serious blow. In October 1941, according to the findings of a public opinion poll, more than two-thirds of those questioned considered the defeat of the fascist powers to be more important than the USA's non-involvement in the war.

At the end of 1941 and in 1942, the movement for an early opening of the Second Front assumed considerable proportions. Demands to commence military actions in the West were put forward by labour councils in many towns and states, and by a number of large industrial unions. The United Autoworkers, over half a million strong, called on the governments of the USA and Great Britain to open the Second Front immediately. Many important leaders of the CIO made similar approaches to the President of the USA. Soldiers and sailors often took part in the mass meetings and expressed their desire to go to Europe. The American workers supported material aid being given to the Soviet Union.

Following on the Stalingrad victory of the Red Army, Stalingrad weeks were held in many cities and in November and December 1942 throughout the entire country a month to honour Russia was held.

Meanwhile, the reactionaries in the USA were taking measures to neutralise the growing influence of the Soviet Union and to forestall the leftward swing of the people.

Bourgeois politicians and the right-wing union leaders launched a propaganda campaign to prove that there were no grounds for the class struggle in the USA, nor, therefore, for the existence of a working-class party. This ideological and political pressure had a definite effect, and within the Communist Party it strengthened the liquidationist tendency headed by Earl Browder, who spoke out in favour of the virtually unconditional "national unity" of the working class and bourgeoisie. In May 1944, Earl Browder and his supporters succeeded in obtaining a decision to disband the Communist Party. The re-establishment of the Party required considerable effort and took place in July 1945 with the aid of fraternal parties.

During the Second World War *Canada's* contribution apart from its direct involvement in military actions (air defence of Britain, expeditionary forces to Italy and France), lay in its delivery of arms, transport, strategic materials and ammunition to the anti-Hitler

¹ S. Welles, *The Time for Decision*, Cleveland, 1945, pp. 171-72.

coalition, primarily to Britain and the USA. War-time regulations gave the government wide powers and the right to act without first obtaining the approval of Parliament.

The trade union movement approved Canada's entry into the war, and this was in step with the prevailing anti-fascist attitudes within the country. As the Second World War became increasingly clearly anti-fascist and of a liberatory nature, the possibilities grew for a broad unity of all national patriotic forces, and for the mobilisation of all the resources of the country to achieve victory. The trade unions stated their renunciation of the right to strike, and that the workers were ready to make certain sacrifices in order to achieve victory over fascism, but not in order to enrich arms speculators and employers, as was the case during the First World War. They considered that the government should bear in mind the traditional demands of the workers of the right to organise, to conclude collective agreements and to strike, and that it should forbid the employers to interfere in the affairs of trade unions, or to set up company unions. The working-class movement continued to demand the introduction of a social insurance scheme. However, the ruling circles and employers while appealing to the patriotic feelings of the workers were themselves quite unwilling to consider these demands.

The government policy of strict control over wages created difficult problems for the working-class movement. The freezing of the already quite low wages which existed on the eve of the war, could not satisfy the workers. Wage stability was subverted by inflation, since controls on prices were not so stringent as on wages. This meant that the trade unions had to resort to strike action. Indeed, there were more than 1,300 strikes in Canada from 1940 to 1944.¹ But although they took this extreme step, the workers tried to make the stoppage of work of short duration: in 1942-1943, which was the peak strike period, approximately 80 per cent of them lasted for less than 5 days.² The trade unions reiterated their complete support for the country's war effort but pointed out that they were forced to take strike action in reply to the inroads made by the monopolies. It is sufficient to say that every fourth strike in 1942 occurred owing to the refusal of the employers to recognise a trade union.

The strengthening of the union movement, which by 1945 had grown to 724,000 members, and the offensive nature of the workers' struggle forced the passing of a law in February 1944 on wartime industrial relations, in which the right to organisation and collective bargaining was recognised.

¹ *Strikes and Lockouts in Canada*, 1970, p. XIII.

² *Canada, 1918-1945. A Historical Survey*, Moscow, 1976, p. 420 (in Russian).

During the war years the class and political awareness of the Canadian workers grew. In the trade union movement there was a substantial swing away from the traditional political aloofness. In the conditions then prevailing the politicisation of the working-class movement led to the growth of influence of the social democratic Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. In 1942, the Canadian Labour Congress declared its support of the CCF, including financial aid. The CCF moved firmly in third place in the party-political system of the country and won an important victory in the 1944 provincial elections in Saskatchewan, forming the first social democratic government in North America. In the general election of 1945 the CCF strengthened its position in the Federal Parliament, receiving 15 per cent of the vote.

During the war years the Communist Party supported the country's war efforts, its activities determined by the slogan "Mobilise Canada for an All-Out War". Although banned during 1940-1943, the Communist Party continued its work and was an important political force in the country. The Party was re-established in August 1943 and worked legally, changing its name to the Labor-Progressive Party. Its position in the trade union movement strengthened, and it led a number of large industrial unions. The growth of the Party's influence was shown in its success at the Federal elections in 1945 when the Communist vote was 110,000 and the Party was for the first time represented in Parliament.

Australia declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, immediately after Britain had done so. An Australian expeditionary force was despatched to the Mediterranean theatre of war. However, the Liberal government of Robert Menzies played a rather passive part in the war. Consequently, the Communist Party of Australia demanded the resignation of the government and the formation of a popular government, one which would effectively conduct the war against the aggressor. The Labour Party adherents, and in the first place the left-wing opposition in the trade unions, supported the Communist call.

The Menzies government banned the Communist Party on 15 June 1940. The trade unions, too, were suppressed as well as the Friends of the Soviet Union Society and the Movement Against War and Fascism. The CPA Central Committee called on the workers to protest against the anti-democratic policy of the authorities. Throughout the country people came out in support of the Communists. The Sydney Trade Union Council, despite the sabotage of the reformist leaders, held a one-day strike in protest.

Under difficult conditions of illegality, the Communists continued the struggle in the trade unions, and the Committee for the Defence of Legal Rights set up in connection with the ban on the Communist

Party, distributed a great number of illegal pamphlets and leaflets. After Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, the Communist Party supported the development of close relations with the USSR and campaigned for opening the Second Front in Europe.

On 7 October 1941 John Curtin's Labour government was elected, and in December 1942 the ban on the Communist Party was lifted. The growing influence of the Communist Party is shown by the fact that the circulation of its newspaper *Tribune* doubled, and its theoretical journal *Communist Review* trebled. The membership also increased and by the end of 1943 it was 20,000. The CPA became a considerable force. Left trends in the trade union movement also grew stronger.

A campaign of support of the Soviet Union developed throughout the country. Meetings of workers adopted resolutions on strengthening ties with the USSR, giving the Soviet people material aid, and the speedy opening of the Second Front in Europe.

THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN ASIA AND AFRICA

The countries of Asia and North Africa, too, became victims of aggression. Here the main striking force of the fascist bloc was Japan. Japanese troops occupied North-East China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma and Indo-China, and were a constant threat to other countries on the continent. In Africa, fascist Italy seized Ethiopia, and its troops, together with the German, landed in North Africa. In the African and Middle East French colonies, with the support of the Vichy government, a pro-fascist order was introduced.

It was far more difficult for the peoples of Asia and Africa than for Europeans to appreciate the true nature of the world conflict. Taking advantage of the hatred felt by the oppressed peoples towards colonial rule, fascist propaganda addressed to the populations of Asia and Africa alleged that Germany's victory would liberate the colonial countries, while Japanese propaganda called for "Asia for the Asians", and "Rid Asia of the White Barbarians".

Some leaders of the national liberation movement hoped that the war would induce the imperial countries to make real concessions to the colonies and dependencies, or at any rate give a pledge that the national aspirations of their peoples would be fulfilled in the future. But those hopes proved to be groundless. Objectively, the policy of maintaining the rule of the colony-owning countries aided the growth of pro-Japanese and pro-German illusions, and made it difficult to build anti-fascist national fronts in the colonies which would prepare the people to resist aggression. During the early stages of the world war even many leaders of the national liberation movement had serious doubts about participating in the anti-fascist struggle.

It was only with the development of fascist aggression and the set-

ting up in the subjugated countries of the "new order" accompanied as it was by the robbery of the occupied states, mass repressions, etc., that the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries as well as the leaders of the national liberation movement began to recognise the danger that fascism presented for humanity. Here the activities of the Communist International in explaining the true nature of fascism was of considerable importance. In exposing the quasi anti-colonialist demagoguery of the fascist powers, the Communist International emphasised that the fascist bloc countries were themselves striving to seize the colonies and carrying out a policy of subjugation and oppression of the peoples. The behaviour of the Italian invaders in Ethiopia and the Japanese soldiers in the occupied provinces of China, left no doubt as to what the rule of fascism and militarism meant for the peoples of Asia and Africa.

The Communists and the organisations led by them initiated the development of the struggle against fascism.

At the start of the war, the Working Committee of the Burmese party Dobama Asiayone where Communists were in the majority, emphasised in a statement: "We condemn fascism not only when it suits our convenience, but always, because it is in contradiction to ... principles and ideals we stand for."¹

The Communist Party of the Philippines exposed the Pan-Asiatic propaganda of Japan and the intrigues of the German and Spanish agents in the Philippines. It demanded of the USA government that it cease providing the Japanese militarists with strategic materials.

In Indonesia, the influential party of Gerindo, which included Communists, was anti-fascist. "The great events now shaking the world", said Gerindo at the onset of the war, "are conditioned not by conflicts between peoples and not between Asia and the West, but between democracy and fascism."²

The Communist Party of Indochina condemned the capitulation to the Japanese by the Vichyite colonial authorities and called on the people to fight both them and the Japanese aggressors.³

In those colonial and dependent countries where the people had not experienced the horrors of occupation, the atmosphere of a general political upsurge grew slowly during the war years, but there were steady changes in the attitudes of society. In these countries, too, people began to recognise that their fate was bound up with those of the people of the whole world, with the fate of those who on the field

¹ V. F. Vasilyev, *Essays on the History of Burma. 1885-1947*, Moscow, 1962, p. 219 (in Russian).

² L. M. Dyomin, *The Japanese Occupation of Indonesia*, Moscow, 1963, p. 59 (in Russian).

³ *Kommunistische Internationale*, Heft 11-12, 1940, pp. 803-04.

of battle or in dangerous underground work faced sacrifices and deprivations in order to destroy fascism and militarism.

After the victory of the Red Army at Stalingrad and later at the Kursk Bulge, new forces began to pour into the ranks of the Resistance movements in Asia and Africa. The Asian and African peoples became convinced that the defeat of the aggressors was within sight. An article marking May Day 1943 in *The Communist International* pointed out: "Today the workers and peoples of all countries have one common enemy only—fascism. Today there is only one question that has to be solved, the destruction of Hitlerism. Effective anti-fascist unity of a nation cannot be achieved spontaneously. In the struggle for its creation, of decisive importance are organisational, purposeful activity, the daring and self-sacrifice of leading anti-fascists."¹

The Resistance movement assumed the character of a general national liberation movement. Its aim was not simply the expulsion of the occupying forces, but the winning of national sovereignty. Although internal class contradictions were evident, they were, during this period, of secondary importance. The main political line of the communist parties in the occupied countries was the creation and strengthening of the united front of all national, patriotic, and anti-imperialist forces.

In *China* the objective of the anti-Japanese movement was to unite the whole nation in repulsing the aggressor. The appeals of the Chinese government to the governments of the West for help were simply ignored, and during the first years of the Japanese invasion of China, the USA continued to increase its trade in equipment and strategic raw materials with Japan.

Only the working people of the USSR responded to China's appeal for help. During the most critical period of the war, the USSR supplied China with arms, ammunition, medicines and oil products on credit. When in 1937 the Guomindang started talks with the USSR, it was compelled to cease its punitive actions against the Chinese Red Army and concentrate all its energies against the external foe.

Soviet aid to China, in part conditioned by the Guomindang's pledge to end the civil war, exercised a direct influence on the political situation in the country. The Guomindang government officially agreed to an anti-Japanese United Front with the Communist Party. As a consequence, regular units of the Communist Party were included in the armed forces of the Chinese Republic. In accordance with the United Front agreement the Communist Party had its mission in the war capital of China, Chongqing. Communists took part in the work of the political department of the National (Guomindang) Army, and were able on a relatively broad scale to carry out work on

¹ *The Communist International*, No. 4, 1943, pp. 5, 10.

Guomindang territory through its newspaper *Xinhua Ribao* and other publications.

Since the CPC armed forces carried out comparatively independent military tasks, were led by communist commanders and were under general party control, the CPC took advantage of these circumstances to re-form, further replenish and strengthen its units. In the course of the war liberated areas were established in various regions of China. These were controlled by the CPC and had their own administration, independent of the Guomindang. In April 1945, there were 19 liberated areas with a population of over 95 million.

When the war ended in August 1945 the Communist Party of China had a membership of 1.2 million, 30 times the number at the beginning of the war. In April 1945 its armed forces numbered nearly 1 million and their reserves, volunteer units, numbered 2.2 million already in 1944.¹

The Chinese people's resistance to the Japanese aggressor greatly influenced the course of the national liberation struggle in Central and South-Eastern Asia, and helped to stimulate the working-class and the communist movement in countries suffering the Japanese invasion.

However, during the war some negative tendencies in the policy of the Communist Party of China came to the fore: the powerful wave of nationalism caused by the Japanese invasion also engulfed the Party. The patriotic upsurge and revolutionary nationalism which aroused broad sections of the Chinese people was used to great effect by the Communist Party both to repulse Japanese aggression and to nurture the revolutionary potential in the struggle with internal reaction. At the same time, the influence of nationalism seriously distorted the ideological-theoretical and political principles of the CPC. Nationalist tendencies in the Party were deliberately encouraged by Mao Tse-tung and his supporters in the leadership of the CPC.

When the anti-Japanese war began, a considerable number of workers were evacuated deep into the interior where they worked without sparing themselves to supply defence needs. But the chaotic state of the economy which became apparent early in 1940 and the mass speculation and pillaging by government officials led to outbreaks of sharp dissatisfaction among the workers. By imposing war-time emergency powers, the Guomindang was able to prevent outright action by the workers. The leadership of the CPC, however, did not take advantage of the situation to strengthen and widen its links with workers in the Guomindang area. It in effect

¹ *Essays on Recent History of China*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 305, 353, 352 (in Russian).

also ignored the workers who remained in the territory occupied by the Japanese.

The actual rejection of work among the urban proletariat was given a theoretical basis by the doctrine of "reactionary" bourgeois towns being "surrounded" by the "revolutionary" villages. The idea that a Chinese poor peasant was more revolutionary than the worker of any capitalist country became widespread. In the early 1940s, under the guise of "Chinese Marxism" and strengthening the unity of the Party, a campaign was launched "to improve the style of work". During this campaign many Chinese communist internationalists were publicly disgraced. The experience of the international communist movement was being discredited, and feelings of estrangement and mistrust of the USSR and its Communist Party were spread about.

The factor which determined the outcome of the liberation struggle of the Chinese people against the Japanese militarists, was the USSR's entry into the war against Japan. Although in reality the Guomindang army did not take part in the hostilities, and the 4th and 8th armies under the command of the Communists were insufficiently equipped to conduct large military operations, the calculations of the Japanese on the organisation of a lengthy resistance were upset by the swift attack by the Soviet armed forces, which destroyed the Kwantung Army. On 2 September 1945 Japan was forced to sign an act of capitulation.

The liberation struggle of the Chinese people united in a National Anti-Japanese Front, the defeat of Japanese militarism, and the decisive military and political support given by the USSR, created internal and international conditions for the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949.

In *Vietnam* the situation which arose due to France's entry into the war and the introduction by the French authorities of repressive laws, meant that the Communist Party of Indochina had to change its methods and forms of struggle. The plenum of the CC of the Communist Party of Indochina (CPIC) meeting in November 1939 adopted a decision to form an anti-imperialist union of workers of Vietnam which would be part of the United National Anti-Imperialist Front. The organisation and the activities of the Union were adapted to the changed conditions. In enterprises and on plantations, underground groups were formed, with 3 or 4 workers led by a Communist or a trade union organiser in each of them.

In the summer of 1940 Japan commenced the "peaceful" occupation of Vietnam, without removing the French colonial administration which was controlled by the Vichy government. This twofold yoke of French colonialists and Japanese occupying forces led to a swift upsurge in the national liberation struggle, the most striking exam-

ples of which were the uprisings that swept northern and southern areas of the country.

Following on the suppression of the uprisings by the French army, the 8th Plenum of the CC of the CPIC in May 1941 decided to form a national patriotic union, the Revolutionary League for the Independence of Vietnam (the Viet-Minh). Among the founders of the Viet-Minh were 14 organisations including the Union of Workers for the Salvation of Vietnam. This type of unification embraced north and central Vietnam. In the south of the country, however, where colonial terror was especially severe, Red trade unions were formed, while the Union of Friends and Mutual Aid Societies were carrying out legal and semi-legal activities, mobilising the people.

By the middle of the 1940s, a revolutionary situation began to emerge. The contradictions between the colonial administration and the Japanese invaders became more acute, an economic crisis was imminent, and the exploitation and impoverishment of the masses increased. The Viet-Minh strengthened its position in a number of rural areas, particularly among the workers of the rubber plantations, and it built an organised movement in the towns, formed armed units, though not a great many, but consisting of the more active fighters for liberation.

The victories of the Soviet Union greatly influenced the maturing of the revolutionary situation. The news of the defeat of the fascist army at Stalingrad stirred the whole of Vietnam. In the towns the population, including both working people and the petty bourgeoisie, demonstrated in their thousands.

The socio-economic and political crisis in Vietnam reached a high point in March 1945 when the Japanese forces in Vietnam organised a so-called government coup, arrested the French colonial administration and interned its armed forces.

On 16 March the Viet-Minh called on the population to take up arms. This met with a wide response throughout the country. From the end of March, partisan units began to arm themselves with weapons taken from the French soldiers, to attack small Japanese armed units and destroy communications and depots. By June 1945, 6 provinces had been liberated, and power there rested with the revolutionary organs elected by the mass of the people.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan considerably improved the conditions for the national liberation struggle. On 16 August the National Congress of the Communist Party called on the people to start a general uprising. The uprising, which was victorious in Hanoi on 19 August, quickly spread to other areas. The Emperor Bao Dai abdicated and the National Liberation Committee formed by the Viet-Minh took power. Then, based on this Committee, a Provisional Government was formed with Ho Chi Minh at its

head. On 2 September 1945 this government proclaimed Vietnam a democratic republic.

The distinctive aspect of the Vietnam revolution was the leadership of the Communist Party of Indochina, and the stable alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The liberated areas, where prior to the general uprising there was already the core of people's power in the shape of liberation committees or people's revolutionary committees and armed units for salvation of the homeland, served as the basis for people's power engendered by the revolution in the towns.

The rule of the Japanese colonialists in *Korea* did not destroy the people's desire for freedom. The Great Patriotic War waged by the Soviet people helped to arouse among the Korean people a will to resist. Korean partisan units, acting as part of the North Eastern People's Liberation Army of China and supported by the working people in the Jiangdao province and the workers in Japanese arms factories in southern Manchuria, intensified their armed struggle against the Japanese garrisons. The Korean Communists prepared the people for the revolutionary overthrow of colonial rule.

The Soviet Union's entry into the war against militarist Japan and the defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army opened the way to national liberation and the development of Korea along the path of democracy and socialism.

At the 3rd Enlarged Meeting of the Executive Committee of the North Korean Organising Committee of the Communist Party, held on 17 December 1945, Kim Il Sung stated: "The heroic Red Army of the Soviet Union, in expelling the Japanese militarists from our Homeland, has brought the Korean people freedom and independence. The road to a bright future now lies before the liberated Korean people."¹

In the *Philippines* the anti-Japanese Resistance was led by the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (CPPI). Conscious of the national and international interests of the workers, the Philippine Communists linked the struggle for the country's independence with the struggle against Japanese militarist expansion. The Communist Party of the Philippines placed in the forefront the task of mobilising all the patriotic forces of the country and the consolidation and strengthening of the working-class movement as the "basic factor, the motive force, the most powerful support and an inexhaustible organisational source"² of the broad national anti-imperialist front. In October 1941 the CPPI leadership worked out a plan for the organisation of the armed partisan movement in the event of the

¹ *The Liberation of Korea*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 53-54 (in Russian).

² *Daily Worker*, 2 December 1938.

Japanese aggressors' invading the country.¹ When Japan attacked Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, an emergency meeting of the Central Committee called for the formation of a United Anti-Japanese Front and approached the autonomous government and the American Command with a proposal to pool efforts to repulse the enemy. But this initiative was not responded to by the USA or the Quezon government. Since the United States was unable to check the aggressor, by the summer of 1942 the Japanese overran the whole of the archipelago.

The Japanese powers, relying on the military-police machine and local collaborators, launched repressive measures against the patriotic elements in Philippine society. A number of leaders of the CPPI were arrested at the end of January 1942, among them the Chairman of the Party Crisanto Evangelista, his deputy Pedro Abad Santos and the General Secretary Guillermo Capadocia. Despite the loss of experienced leaders, the Political Bureau of the CPPI was able to resume activities quite quickly. A new leadership began functioning, with Vicente Lava as General Secretary. In January 1942, the first partisan units led by Communists were already in action in Central Luzon. At the Communist-sponsored conference of representatives of worker and peasant organisations on 16 February 1942, a National Anti-Japanese United Front was set up under the slogan of "First Things First—Fight the Japanese". The Front steered for the achievement of complete independence and the formation of a democratic government.

The Army of Resistance Against Japan (Hukbalahap) was formed in March 1942, which united the partisan groups led by Communists and self-defence units which emerged spontaneously in the villages. The leading role in the political leadership of Hukbalahap was that of the CPPI, which had succeeded in bringing together representatives of different strata in the ranks of the Hukbalahap. As a result it was a fighting-fit army which had the widest support of the local population. Towards the end of 1942 the Hukbalahap liberated a number of areas in Central Luzon, setting up democratic self-government there.²

The Communist Party did not cease its efforts to bring together in a United Anti-Japanese Front all patriotic and anti-fascist forces, but their consolidation was hampered by the lack of cohesion within the Resistance movement as a whole. Although throughout the country there were many partisan units and groups, only a few had agreed on coordinating joint actions with Hukbalahap.

The creation of a united front was also made more difficult because of the absence of effective alliance between the working class and the

¹ R. Constantino, *The Philippines: the Continuing Past*, Manila, 1978, p. 139.

² E. Lachica, *Huk: Philippine Agrarian Society in Revolt*, Manila, 1971, pp. 114-15.

peasantry. The towns were completely controlled by the occupying powers, and this meant that the ties between the urban and village workers were broken. At the same time, the workers who had succeeded in leaving the occupied towns and joining the People's Army, fought bravely against the invaders and were able to share with the peasants their political experience, understanding and discipline.

During the concluding stage of the war in the Pacific there were 10,000 fighting men in the Hukbalahap, and 30,000 reservists. The Hukbalahap rendered the US Army considerable assistance when it invaded Luzon in January-February 1945, and played an exceedingly active role in the defeat of the Japanese. Having cleared the archipelago of the Japanese invaders, the Americans then attacked the democratic forces, carrying out a number of repressive acts against the Hukbalahap. However, this met with resistance for during the war years the CPPI had accumulated considerable experience of organisational and political mass work which had acted as a spur to the working-class movement. The unity of the workers and peasants had been re-established and the basis laid for a united anti-imperialist front.

Burma entered the war as part of the British colonial empire. The refusal of the British government to consider the demands for Burma's independence and the increasingly harsh suppression of its supporters as well as the arrests of leaders of the national liberation movement, all gave rise to an outburst of anti-British feelings. This prompted many leaders of the national liberation movement to align themselves with Japan which had promised to assist Burma to achieve independence. Only the Burmese Communists opposed this collaboration.

During 1941, the Japanese formed the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in Thailand, whose officer core was made up of Burmese nationalists. Alongside the Japanese troops, this army entered Burma.

The defeat and retreat of the British troops from Burma in the middle of 1942 made it possible for national organs of power to be set up in various populated areas. However, having strengthened their position in Burma, the Japanese Command refused to honour its pledges. The Burmese local organs of power were abolished and the BIA disbanded, being replaced by the Burma Defence Army controlled by Japanese advisers.¹ A Burmese Administration with consultative functions was set up on 1 August 1942, and Burma in fact became an occupied country.

As a counter-move an anti-Japanese Resistance movement develop-

¹ Mountbatten of Burma, *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 1943-1945*, London, 1951, p. 143.

ed in 1942, led by Burmese Communists. They organised underground groups and partisan units. The first underground Congress of the Communist Party of Burma was held in Dedaya at the beginning of 1943 which adopted the thesis "On the Freedom of Burma".¹

Despite the fact that in 1943 Japan agreed to give the country formal independence, the disillusionment with the alliance with Japan was so great that the Resistance movement spread throughout the country. At the beginning of 1944, following talks between representatives of Communists and other opponents of the occupation, a united front of national liberation, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), was formed. In August 1944, at a conference of representatives of the national liberation movement a Supreme Council of the AFPFL was elected which in practice became the underground government of the country.

By the beginning of 1945 the League had worked out a plan for an uprising against the occupying forces, and the majority of partisan units and underground groups were under the general command.² With the entry of British troops into Burma, partisan units and subdivisions of the Burmese army joined with them in many battles for the liberation of the country.

The uprising in Burma helped to strengthen the AFPFL within the country; its Supreme Council in practice became the national government and the branches of the AFPFL in the localities became the local authorities. The transformation of the AFPFL into a national mass organisation played the decisive role in the subsequent struggle for the independence of Burma.

In *Indonesia* in May 1940, representatives of the Communists, Gerindo, trade unions and other important public figures held an underground meeting where an underground organisation, the Anti-Fascist Movement of Indonesia (Geraf) was formed. In September 1941, the Trade Union Centre of State Employees together with GAPI and the Federation of Moslem women's and youth organisations formed the most representative political alliance, the National Council of Indonesia. This was to support GAPI's demand that Indonesia be accorded dominion status.

The process of consolidation also took place in the working-class movement. In the summer of 1941, unions of private sector employees merged. It was thought that in the future they would combine with the already existing trade union centre to form a single organisation. After the announcement by the government of the Netherlands Indies of a state of war with Japan in December 1941, both trade union centres declared their unconditional support for the Dutch

¹ *Amerasia*, 1 April 1943, p. 43.

² Mounq Maung, *The Forgotten Army*, Rangoon, 1946, p. 5.

authorities. However, at the beginning of January 1942, despite the talks between the colonial administration and GAPI still in progress, a new group of leading personalities of the national liberation and working-class movements were arrested. That same month Japanese troops started landing in Indonésia.

The occupation regime and terror instituted by the Japanese, the increased exploitation and the lowering of living standards, disillusionment with the "liberation mission" of the Japanese—all these factors led to an upsurge in the national liberation movement. Spontaneous actions, mainly by the peasants, against forced deliveries and requisitioning occurred in different regions of the archipelago.

The activities of the underground anti-Japanese organisations increased. One of the first was a group led by Amir Sjarifuddin, who had been prominent in the pre-war national liberation movement. Many members of this group, including Sjarifuddin, were members of the Communist Party. But early in 1943 his group was uncovered and liquidated. The influence of the Communists was also felt in the underground Gerindo organisation. The group led by Sharir and the Union of Students, Persatuan Mahasiswa, which included students and teachers from colleges and universities in Djakarta, Bogor, Bandung, and Surabaya, played a prominent role in the liberation movement.

The leadership of the underground organisations, mainly composed of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements, had poor ties with the masses and there was no concerted action between the various groups.

The national bourgeoisie regarded collaboration with the Japanese primarily as a political manoeuvre, as a means whereby they could spread their influence through Japanese-controlled legal organisations. The leaders of the national and petty bourgeoisie who led these organisations were in contact with the underground anti-Japanese movement.

Towards the end of the war the Resistance movement in Indonesia became stronger. It encompassed actions of the peasants and urban poor, uprisings in the outlying districts, discontent in the Japanese-sponsored "voluntary army for the defence of the Homeland", activities of the underground organisations, and demands of the national bourgeoisie dissatisfied with the concessions and manoeuvres of the invaders. All combined this prepared the scene for a revolutionary situation throughout the country. The defeat of Japan in August 1945 made possible the victory of the Indonesian revolution.

When the Second World War began the Viceroy of *India* declared the country a participant without any prior consultations with Indian political parties. This created profound indignation throughout the country. The All-India Congress Committee of the Indian

National Congress (INC) adopted a special declaration which said that support of the British war effort was dependent on a recognition by the British government of India's right to self-determination, the immediate formation of a government responsible to the Central Legislative Assembly, the calling of a Constituent Assembly, etc.¹ The Communist Party of India called for the development of a broad anti-imperialist movement.

Since Britain avoided giving a precise answer to the demands of the INC, in October 1940 Mahatma Gandhi announced the beginning of a new civil disobedience campaign. The colonial powers arrested more than 20,000 Congress members including almost all the leaders.

Following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union the Communist Party called for a continuation of the struggle for independence, while at the same time working to transform the struggle against the fascist countries into a people's war, and supporting the British war effort. Later, in July 1942, the ban on the Communist Party was lifted. The Indian Congress Party, too, expressed sympathy with the Soviet people subjected to fascist attack and noted the historic significance of the building of socialism in the USSR.

The worsening of Britain's military situation, particularly after Japan's entry into the war, compelled its government to try and achieve an accommodation with the Indian National Congress. Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British War Cabinet, went to India in March 1942 for talks with the leaders of Indian political parties. By that time Congress leaders were no longer in jail.

Great Britain agreed to grant India the status of a dominion, with the proviso that the provinces and principalities which did not wish to join in, could continue their former relations with Britain or create their own independent dominions. The Indian National Congress rejected these proposals and in August 1942 decided to conduct a civil disobedience campaign unless Britain formed a national government. The response was the arrest of Congress Party leaders including Mahatma Gandhi. Spontaneous anti-British uprisings, known as the August Revolution, followed throughout the country. Peasants burned down manorial estates and attacked police stations and post offices. Groups of young people, led primarily by INC left-wing members, Socialists and Communists, destroyed railway bridges and communication lines. In many places the rebels engaged in guerilla actions. British troops and the police were moved in to suppress the actions. Nearly 2,000 people were killed and more than 60,000 arrested.²

In 1943-1945, the national liberation struggle took the form of

¹ J. Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 432-34.

² K. A. Antonoya, G. M. Bongard-Levin, G. G. Kotovsky, *History of India*, Moscow, 1979, p. 463 (in Russian).

strikes, peasant actions, etc., in which economic and political demands were interlinked. Communists played an increasingly important role in the organisation of these events. Communist Party membership rapidly increased (from 4,000 in 1942 to 30,000 in 1945), as did that of the organisations it led, such as the All-India Trade Union Congress (from 330,000 to 509,000 members), Peasant Union (from 225,000 to 825,000) and units of Communist Party volunteers (reaching 25,000).¹ Thus, when the time arrived for decisive engagements with British imperialism, the organised worker and peasant movement in India had become a conspicuous political force.

While Japanese imperialism stepped up its aggression against other nations, in *Japan* itself it was suppressing the labour movement. In 1940 the Konoye government, with the support of right-wing Social Democrats, succeeded in achieving the "self-disbandment" of trade unions. The majority of the members were drawn into the Societies for Serving the Country Through Work (Sampo) which were organised in all industries and at every enterprise. Every political party from the bourgeois Seiyukai and Minseito to the Socialist Mass Party "disbanded" themselves, and joined the Association for Assisting the Throne. A monarcho-fascist dictatorship reigned in the country. Most of the trade union leaders ceased their activities, some were thrown into prisons and others joined the chauvinist movement Assisting the Throne.

All this made for an exceedingly difficult situation in the liberation struggle of the Japanese workers.

Only the Communists, who had gone underground, continued the struggle, organising the workers' resistance which neither terror, nor the rigid system of control of the workers within the Sampo could break.

A spontaneous resistance to the system of exploitation was developing, expressed in late arrival at work, leaving early, absenteeism and desertion by workers under labour conscription, defective output, sabotage, etc.

From 1941 to 1944 there were 1,303 industrial conflicts.² The most significant actions of the workers led by Communists took place in 1942 and 1943 at the Ikegai naval works, the engineering factory of the Kawasaki Yukogyo company in Kōbe, and in the Hitachi company's factory in Toyko.

As soon as the Second World War commenced the legal activities of all parties and organisations in *Algeria* were stopped. The Secretary of the Algerian Communist Party (PCA) Qaddur Belgaim, party

¹ *Recent History of India*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 417-19 (in Russian).

² *The Labour Movement During the War in the Pacific*, Tokyo, 1965, p. 14 (in Japanese).

veterans Ali Rabia and François Serrano, the leader of the Dockers, Union, G. Tarrecillas, and others perished in prison. Only a few members of the Central Committee, Ahmed Smaili, Maurice Laban and Georges Raffini, succeeded in going into hiding and organising illegal party work. 28 leaders of the Algerian People's Party (PPA) led by Ahmed Messali Hajjim and M. Khider were also imprisoned.

After France's defeat the Algerian Communist Party concentrated its efforts on the organisation of struggle against the Vichyites and sabotaging the work of the Italian-German Commissions Controlling the Fulfillment of Armistice Terms. The Algerian Communist Party supported a united Freedom Front to rally all the Resistance fighters.¹

The liberation of Algeria at the end of 1942 was accompanied by an upsurge of the country's democratic movement which forced the British and American Command to make concessions. In the spring of 1943, thousands of Communists and democrats were released from prisons and concentration camps, Vichy laws were abolished and the authorities had to take into account the revival of legal activities of the Algerian Communist Party and Algerian nationalists.

The PPA remained banned. It played an active role in the anti-fascist Resistance. Towards the end of 1940, a new leadership of the PPA (Lamin Dabagin, Muhammed Taleb, Hosin Aslah) built up a network of underground cells across the country, composed primarily of students and young intellectuals, and also peasants. The Party was reorganised, the publication of three newspapers arranged, and a more strict control of entry into the Party introduced. The main thrust of its work was agitation for an independent Algeria, popularising the slogan "Algeria for the Algerians" and exposing the crimes of the colonial powers and their reprisals against the PPA. Some members of the PPA collaborated with the occupying powers in France. Colonialist propaganda took advantage of this in order to blacken the PPA and slander the national liberation movement in general.² It should, however, be borne in mind that although pro-German illusions among some of its activists prevented its elaboration of a clear and unanimous position,³ as a party the PPA never adopted a pro-German viewpoint, and those who had been inclined to support the Axis powers, had in the main been expelled from its ranks even prior to the onset of the war.

On 10 March 1943, 56 leaders of nationalist organisations published a Manifesto of the Algerian People in which they demanded the "immediate and effective participation by Algerian Moslems in the government of the country", and the creation after the war of an

¹ Jacques Duclos, *La France et l'Algérie*, Paris, 1955, p. 6.

² M. Benazet, *L'Afrique du Nord en danger*, Paris, 1947, p. 76.

³ M. Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN: le populisme révolutionnaire en Algérie*, Paris, 1975, pp. 105, 107.

"autonomous state" in Algeria.¹ But the authorities only granted full French citizenship rights to feudal landlords, the bourgeoisie, civil servants, and intellectuals. The rest were entitled to elect two-fifths of the members of municipal and general councils. Then the Liberals, led by F. Abbas, the Ulemas led by B. al-Ibrahimi and the underground PPA led by A. Messali created the association Friends of the Manifesto and Freedom which proposed a federation between an autonomous Algeria and liberated France. There were nearly 500,000 members in this association. The response of the authorities was an intensification of repression. The provocative shooting by the police of demonstrations in Sétif and Helma on 8 May 1945 led to an anti-colonial uprising. After a week's fighting, the uprising was drowned in blood. 40,000 patriots perished, and approximately 5,000, including the majority of the leaders of the Friends of the Manifesto, were arrested.²

The uprising revealed the determination of the patriots to fight arms in hand for their independence. The majority of Algerians were beginning to realise that French-Moslem cooperation was most unlikely.

The government of *Egypt* severed diplomatic relations with Germany in September 1939. A state of war ensued, democratic rights were abolished and a strict censorship was introduced.

Egyptian society was divided in its approach towards the warring coalitions. Palace circles, led by the King, while declaring their readiness to cooperate with Britain, in reality sympathised with the Axis countries. There was a fascist party in existence, *Misr el-Fatat* (Young Egypt), which engaged in spying and sabotage at the behest of the German and Italian secret services. The more influential elements in the party of Liberals also inclined towards the Axis powers, while another bourgeois grouping united around the *Wafd* Party supported active cooperation with the British and demanded the declaration of war on the Axis.

In September 1940 the Italian army invaded Egypt from Libya. However, with the arrival of reinforcements the British army drove the Italians back to Libya. In March 1941 General Rommel's tank corps was sent into Libya to assist the Italians. In Egypt fascist agents became active. A number of Egyptian secret organisations established direct contact with Rommel's staff and the German Intelligence. Some political parties engaged in considerable anti-British propaganda. Palace circles, considering the moment to be propitious, began to prepare for a pro-fascist coup. The British Embassy then demanded an end to the fifth column activities in

¹ *Du Manifeste à la République Algérienne*, Algiers, 1948, p. 41.

² R. G. Landa, *The Crisis of the Colonial System in Algeria (1931-1945)*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 119, 123, 220 (in Russian).

Egypt, and as a result of British pressure a Wafd government was formed headed by Mustafa el-Nahhas Pasha. This ensured a reliable rear and, therefore, facilitated the continuation of military operations by Great Britain. The Nahhas government launched an energetic struggle against the pro-fascist quarters.

In the spring of 1942, Egyptian public opinion started veering towards support of the anti-fascist coalition. To a considerable degree this could be attributed to the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against Hitler's invasion. Interest in the USSR grew, and the anti-fascist forces of workers, students and intellectuals increased their activities. On 26 August 1943 Egypt and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations.

The government of Nahhas Pasha carried out a number of social and economic reforms favouring the working people. Laws were passed lowering taxes on small landowners, individual contracts when hiring workers were made legal, as well as insurance against industrial accidents, etc. In September 1942 trade unions were legalised.

By May 1943 the whole of North Africa had been liberated by the Allied armies.

As military operations moved away from Egypt, the Wafd-led liberation movement gained in scope. Its main demands were for the abolition of the 1936 treaty, the evacuation of British troops from the valley of the Nile and the unity of Egypt and the Sudan. On 26 August 1944 Nahhas Pasha delivered a speech in which he formulated the chief demands of the Egyptian people. This speech aroused acute dissatisfaction among the British authorities, and on 8 October 1944, the Nahhas Cabinet was forced to resign.

A coalition government was formed of representatives of right-wing parties, headed by Mahir, leader of the Saad Party. The trait that united these different forces was their hatred of the Wafd and Nahhas Pasha. As its first act, the new government released from prison all reactionary politicians arrested during the war. Repression began against workers, democrats and Wafdists.

On 26 February 1945, giving way to British and American pressure and in the hope of achieving entry into the United Nations then in process of formation, the Egyptian government declared war on Germany.

Ethiopia, against whom the Italian fascists commenced a war on 3 October 1935, was the world's first independent country to suffer aggression by European fascism. For more than 5 years the patriotic forces of Ethiopia battled against the well-armed forces of fascist Italy.

In April 1941, the mass armed struggle of the Ethiopian people, supported by a British Expeditionary Force and French and Belgian

units, brought about the defeat of the Italian army. The patriotic forces liberated Addis-Ababa and the entire country.

The Ethiopian Resistance, whose main core were the peasant masses and urban working people, pinned down considerable armed forces of Italian fascism throughout 1936-1941. In August 1936 there were more than 240,000 Italian troops in Ethiopia; at the beginning of 1938, 88,000, and in 1940, 90,000 (this not counting African recruits whose numbers in 1940 reached 200,000). Over 750,000 Ethiopian people were sacrificed in the struggle against Italian fascism.¹ By their active fight against the Italian invaders and successes in liberating their country from fascist rule, Ethiopian patriots made a vital contribution to the anti-fascist struggle.

The part played in the struggle against German and Italian fascism by people of many other African countries and territories, which were as a rule colonies, was basically two-fold in character.

Firstly, by increasing the production of raw materials and food-stuffs which were widely used by Great Britain and America. Africa supplied these countries with iron, manganese, chrome, uranium and cobalt ores, copper, tin, bauxite, diamonds and other precious minerals. For example, in 1944 Britain imported from Africa goods worth 80 per cent more than it had received in 1938, while its total imports had increased by 42 per cent. Supplies from Africa also played an important role in the delivery of raw materials to the USA. For instance, the African proportion in American imports of copper grew from 2.6 per cent in 1938 to 21.9 per cent in 1945.²

The contribution made by African peoples to the anti-fascist struggle was to be seen in the participation of hundreds of thousands of Africans in the Fighting France forces, and in the British forces in battles against the fascist bloc countries. It is sufficient to say that in 1943-1945, the French West African anti-fascist force alone included 100,000 African soldiers.³

The British East African regiments (the Royal African Rifles) took part in military operations in Africa, in the Middle East and in South-Eastern Asia. There were nearly 300,000 Africans from Kenya and Uganda in the British armed forces of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The overall number of Africans who took part in the war against Germany, Italy and Japan was nearly one million men.

The leadership of the Communist Party of *South Africa* judged the nature of the Second World War from the viewpoint of proletarian internationalism. The Report of the CPSA Central Committee, en-

¹ V. A. Trofimov, *Italian Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 185-95 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

³ *Recent History of the National Liberation Struggle of African Peoples*, Moscow, 1978, p. 266 (in Russian).

dorsed by the National Conference of the Party in March 1940, emphasised that the duty of the Party was at one and the same time to oppose the war and repulse the pro-fascist offensive of the Nationalist Party in South Africa. The interests of the struggle against imperialism demanded joint action by the African, Coloured and Indian populations of the country.

After the attack of fascist Germany on the Soviet Union, the CPSA stated that the decisive front of the whole war was where the Soviet people were fighting the nazis. The outcome would decide the fate of the whole of humanity.

Despite police persecution the Communist Party intensified its activities. Its membership increased 4-fold during 1941-1943. Two Communists were elected to the local council in Cape Town and one in Johannesburg. The publication of the Party newspaper *Inkululeko* was started, and its circulation steadily increased. In 1942 the Defend South Africa Campaign developed. Large meetings were held throughout the country addressed by leaders of the Communist Party. Demands were made to arm Africans who were being called-up, to abolish the colour bar in industry, and to give the oppressed masses civil rights in the country which they were being asked to defend. Tens of thousands of leaflets were printed and distributed. One of them bore the heading "Arm the People".

The persistent and devoted work of the Communists led to a growth in the membership and the militancy of the trade union movement. During the war years, African workers conducted a fight for higher wages and recognition of their right to organise. According to official figures there were 304 strikes during 1939-1945. In November 1941 a Council of Non-European Trade Unions was set up which by 1945 included within its ranks 119 trade unions with 158,000 members. J.B. Marks led the trade union centre. He subsequently became the Chairman of the Communist Party of South Africa. In February 1941 a trade union was formed in the food and canning industry and that same year an African miners' union came into being, with a membership of 25,000.

The period of the war was notable in that there was a development of revolutionary national self-awareness of Africans, particularly among the youth and intellectuals. In the African National Congress the role of its Youth League grew. Among its members Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu found common ground with Communists and stood for going over to more revolutionary mass actions in the struggle against the system of national oppression.

In 1944 the CC of the Communist Party stated that the demands of national organisations to eliminate race discrimination and create a free and progressive social order must be supported by the working-

class movement which in its own interest "must identify itself completely with the struggle of the non-European peoples".¹ The cooperation between the Communist Party and the African National Congress continued to develop.

During 1939-1945, the activity of the masses grew, the working-class movement gained strength, important steps were taken towards achieving the unity of the forces of national liberation and of the working class. The participation by Africans in the struggle against fascism during the Second World War contributed to increased national self-awareness of the African peoples, the growth in organisation and class consciousness of the African proletariat, and created conditions for further activation of the struggle for national liberation.

THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

The peoples of Latin America did not have to suffer the calamities which befell the European and many Asian countries. Only the Brazilians, with an Expeditionary Force of approximately 26,000 combatants who fought in Italy, and the Mexicans, with an air squadron incorporated in the USA force, took part in military operations. Despite this, the war immediately became the focus of the political scene in Latin America.

With the ruling circles of the majority of these countries there were influential forces which sought to prevent the Latin American countries from supporting the anti-Hitler coalition. These people feared that the struggle against fascism might turn into internal upheavals which could destroy their existing authoritarian political systems. The ruling circles preferred to continue their reactionary domestic policies which were supported up to the hilt by the USA. Propaganda campaigns were initiated to divert the labour movement from its revolutionary aims. Nationalist ideas were central to this bourgeois propaganda, and although frequently flavoured with demagogic slogans such as "struggle against imperialism" they were always spearheaded against Communists. Some national-reformist leaders spread the idea among the workers that all activities against American imperialism should be ceased.

The USA took advantage of the war economy in order to make the Latin American countries even more dependent on it. The system of economic dependence on American imperialism was backed up by political and military agreements which bound this continent to the USA.

¹ B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane. South African Revolutionary. A Political Biography*, London, 1975, p. 116.

Latin American progressive mass organisations developed a widespread campaign for struggle against fascism. In June 1940 the Central Committee of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (CTAL) adopted a resolution which called on the workers to rise "against fascism as a social theory, against all manifestations of fascism in political, economic and social spheres, and for the creation of a united front to oppose the dictatorial and fascist regimes on the American continent".¹

With the Soviet Union's entry into the war, the anti-fascist struggle reached a higher stage. A campaign of solidarity with the Soviet people developed in all the countries of Latin America. It was led by the communist parties and progressive unions. At the 1st Congress of the CTAL in November 1941 a resolution was adopted on the organisation of material support to be given to peoples directly engaged in struggle with the fascist aggressors.

In August 1941 in Argentina, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) announced a short general strike of solidarity with the peoples battling against fascism. Representatives of progressive Argentine intellectuals, E. Troise, Augusto Bunge, J. Gonzalez Iramain and others, organised a Democratic Confederation for Aid to peoples fighting fascism. As a result of its efforts 7 shipments of goods were dispatched to the USSR, including 32,000 pairs of footwear.² The Mexican workers responded to the news of the nazi attack on the USSR by holding a meeting in the capital, Mexico City, attended by thousands, where a resolution was passed demanding that the government re-establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. In 1942, Mexican workers organised a broad campaign around demands that the USA and Britain speedily open a Second Front in Europe. The National Assembly of Young Cubans declared 1 September 1941 a Day of International Youth Solidarity. A campaign to collect gifts for Soviet soldiers was organised on that day. In November that year workers decided to donate a day's pay to a Red Army fund.³ The Unity for Victory movement emerged in Chile, which helped to strengthen the friendly feelings of the Chilean people to the Soviet Union. Solidarity committees and groups were set up in many other countries of Latin America. As a result of the pressure of public opinion, the governments of a number of Latin American countries decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The movement for solidarity with the USSR made its contribution to the victory over fascism and created the conditions necessary to consolidate the progressive forces in Latin America.

¹ CTAL: 1938-1948. *Resoluciones de sus asambleas*, Mexico, 1948, pp. 27-28.

² *Esbozo de historia del Partido Comunista de la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1947, p. 94.

³ A. Garcia, P. Mironchuk, *Esbozo historico de las relaciones entre Cuba—Rusia y Cuba—URSS*, Havana, 1976, p. 184.

There was a positive response in various political circles to the Communist call for united action. In 1940, Radicals and Socialists organised Unity Committees in a number of provinces in Argentina. During the 1942 presidential elections in Chile, the combined efforts of Communists, Socialists and Radicals, supported by a section of Liberals, succeeded in preventing the attempts of the right-wing to secure the election of the former dictator Carlos Ibáñez. In 1942, thanks to the support of all progressive forces, Alfonso López was again elected President of Colombia. The progressive forces in Cuba became stronger. "The victory of the movement, initiated by our Party, for a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly in 1938-1940," later commented Cuban Communists, "was a great success for the masses, which for a time influenced the situation and, together with the prevailing international factors (the anti-fascist war, participation in an international coalition led by the USSR, etc.), plus the policy of the People's Socialist Party in relation to Batista, Grau and similar types, helped to paralyse the forces of reaction at that period."¹ The People's Socialist Party (known as the Revolutionary Communist Union in 1939-1944) which "represented the most advanced elements of the working class both in the towns and in the countryside"² became, during the war years, the most important factor in the political life of the country. The Communist Party of Uruguay carried out considerable work in bringing together the working class and other sections of the people.

The victories of the Red Army over the fascist hordes strengthened the people and filled them with new hopes. Throughout the whole of Latin America the poems of the great Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, *Songs of Love to Stalingrad*, could be heard. Latin American Communists explained to the people that the victory over fascism was being ensured, in the first place, by the Soviet people and the Soviet system.

The Communists of Latin America saw the struggle against fascism as an important organic part of the struggle against imperialism. As events on the field of battle developed in favour of the anti-fascist forces, so the labour and the democratic movements in Latin America grew stonger. Neither the manoeuvres of the bourgeois-national reformists, nor the reprisals by dictatorships in their death throes could hold back the workers' onslaught on the positions held by capital and reaction. The defeat of the fascist hordes on the battlefields stimulated a hitherto unknown enthusiasm among the Latin American masses, a belief in the possibility of victory over the

¹ *Partido Socialista Popular. VIII Asamblea Nacional. Informes Resoluciones, Programa, Estatutos*, Havana, 1960, p. 680.

² Fidel Castro, *Material de Estudio. Circulo de instruccion revolucionaria de los CDR*, Havana, 1962, p. 115.

oligarchies ruling in their countries. Tyrannical regimes toppled. The Peñaranda dictatorship in Bolivia fell in December 1943. In May 1944 the general strike in El Salvador decisively influenced the overthrow of the bloody rule of Martínez. The people of Ecuador at that time supported the army which overthrew Arroyo del Río's corrupt government.

The bourgeois-democratic revolution in Guatemala started in October 1944. The Constitution proclaimed on 5 March 1945 envisaged broad bourgeois-democratic freedoms and an agrarian reform based on the abolition of the latifundia. Free compulsory schooling for children from 7 to 14 years of age was introduced.

In Brazil the "new government" of Getulio Vargas was shaken by strikes and demonstrations which began in the second half of 1943. An amnesty was declared in April 1945 and the Communist Party was able to work openly. The highest point of the strike movement was reached in May 1945, when during one month alone 365 strikes took place, many of which resulted in victory for the workers.¹ In addition to economic demands, the Brazilian workers also made political demands—the abolition of the dictatorship and the re-establishment of democratic order. The prestige and membership of the Communist Party grew rapidly; during 1944-1945 its membership rose from 2,000-3,000 to 50,000.

Despite repression the Argentine workers did not lay down their arms. At the beginning of 1945 they achieved changes in the internal political life of the country: Communists and other democrats were freed from prisons, political parties and independent trade unions were allowed to function.

In Paraguay in January 1945, a general strike broke out against the Higinio Morínigo dictatorship. It was organised by the illegal trade union centre, the Workers' Council. This strike shook the dictatorship to the core. The Venezuelan unions in 1945 succeeded in getting the government to declare 1 May a national holiday, the Workers' Day. Democratic changes began in both Ecuador and Peru in 1944-1945 as a result of pressure from the organised workers' movement. In Colombia the working class proved to be the decisive force which prevented the attempt of the conservatives to bring about a reactionary coup in July 1944. As a result of the Cuban workers' struggles, at the end of the war the wages of the sugar factory workers were increased by 20 per cent, and of the plantation workers by 10 per cent. Eviction of tenants and rent increases were banned, and peasants could no longer be forced off the land. The Cuban labour movement supported anti-imperialist slogans and

¹ B. I. Koval, *History of the Brazilian Proletariat (1857-1967)*, Moscow, 1968, p. 307 (in Russian).

forced the leaders of the Cuban Revolutionary Party to present a programme in the 1944 election which contained promises to firmly support the national interests.

The Amesagi government in Uruguay introduced some measures to improve the material conditions and civil rights of the workers and employees. These included unemployment benefits in a number of industries. The government of the left Liberal Alfonso López in Colombia put into effect measures to improve the lot and civil rights of the workers. In Costa Rica, as a result of the pressure of the labour and democratic movements, a Labour Code was introduced with clauses stipulating the workers' right to organise, to strike and to have social insurance benefits. During the war years, the workers achieved the introduction of laws on the minimum wage in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia. Democratic elements in that period considerably influenced the policies of the governments of Chile, Mexico and other countries where institutions of bourgeois democracy remained intact.

During the Second World War the trade union movement in Latin America strengthened. In 1943 the Confederation of Workers was formed in Costa Rica, and in 1944, in Peru and Ecuador. That same year the miners' union, the leading trade union centre, was formed in Bolivia, and in October 1944 the Confederation of Workers of Guatemala. The Communist Party of El Salvador was the main force able to bring about the creation of the National Labour Union (1944) which soon became the unified trade union centre within the country.

The struggle of the Communists for a united labour movement was widely recognised by the workers. Thus, the Confederation of Workers of Cuba was led by a member of the National Committee of the People's Socialist Party, Lazaro Peña, and the Confederation of Ecuador also by a Communist, Pedro Saad. The Argentine Communists supported the activities of the United Labour Leadership, an independent trade union organisation formed in 1944 to counter the official government-sponsored trade unions. Brazilian Communists made great efforts to set up a national trade union centre. There were large trade unions in Colombia, Mexico and Chile. The Latin American Confederation of Labor made a notable contribution to the struggle for the unity of labour action on a continental scale. In the mid-1940s it brought together over 4 million workers, in other words, nearly one half of them throughout the continent. The Latin American Confederation was one of the initiators of a world congress of trade unions, and Latin American Communists were very influential in it.

In Latin America the communist movement itself made great strides during the war years. In 1939 there were only 90,000 Com-

munists, but by 1947 their numbers had grown to 370,000,¹ and they were supported by millions.

In a number of countries the communist parties became the prime factor in the political scene. During the war Communists were in the governments of Cuba and Ecuador. Communist parties played an important role in the formation of political alliances which ensured the victory of the left forces and barred the way to election of reactionary candidates. This was the case in Chile, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Cuba. As a result of the democratic upsurge following the defeat of fascism the communist parties of Brazil, Peru, Venezuela and Argentina won legal status, and in the first post-war elections achieved representation in the municipal councils and parliament. The Dominican Communist Party was formed in 1944. Despite the illegal conditions of work, it soon won the respect of the workers.

During the war years the communist parties developed ideologically and organisationally. They performed sterling work in propagating Marxism-Leninism. From the early 1940s Marxist literature was widely available; Buenos Aires and Mexico became major publishing centres of works by the founders of Marxism-Leninism in Spanish.

The revolutionary and democratic upsurge in the countries of Latin America was all-embracing; it involved not only the working class, but the urban middle strata, the peasantry, and young people, and caused a growth of democratic feelings in the army. The basis for this upsurge, the pivot of the whole national liberation movement, was the working-class movement, the most revolutionary class of the day. The communist parties, growing in numbers, became a political force, capable of leading the struggle of the Latin American people for democracy and socialism.

* * *

The period of the Second World War was one of the most heroic in working-class history. It was natural that the working class of the first socialist state became the force which guaranteed victory over the aggressors and rescued world civilisation from fascist barbarism. The working class of the other countries in the anti-Hitler coalition actively worked for victory. It was the core and the main force of the anti-fascist Resistance.

¹ *The Great October and the Communist Parties of Latin America*, Moscow, 1978, p. 35 (in Russian).

In the bitter combat with fascism, in the struggle for freedom, democracy and social progress, the international working class and communist movement made enormous sacrifices, losing many of their best sons and daughters.

The war was a severe test of the endurance of socio-economic systems, classes and parties, and it determined their place and role in the struggle which had engulfed the world. The moral and political crisis of capitalism as a system which had given birth to fascism and war, was clearly exposed against the background of colossal devastation and disaster which had befallen humankind. The reactionary bourgeoisie and its parties either capitulated and collaborated with the enemy in an endeavour to preserve their privileges, or were unable and did not wish to organise an effective repulse to the fascist aggressors. In fact, the ruling circles of both the aggressor states and the states they occupied brought the countries concerned to national catastrophe.

The war and its aftermath revealed the maturity and responsible attitude of the working class, its ability to defend not only itself, but the national and common human interests, as well as being able to present an effective programme of development through peace, democracy and social progress. The internationalism of the working class was manifest with exceptional clarity during the Second World War, as was its ability to combine national and international interests in its policy and its actions.

The events of the war clearly demonstrated the tremendous superiority, economic, military, moral and political, of the socialist system and the ability of the working class as a ruling class, as the leading force in social development, to defend the freedom and independence of nations. The first socialist state was the centre and stronghold of the struggle against the fascist aggressors, and it fulfilled its liberatory mission in relation to the peoples of Europe and Asia. The Red Army drove the Hitlerite invaders not only from the territory of the Soviet Union, but from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, part of Yugoslavia, Austria, Northern Norway, and Japanese militarists from North-East China and North Korea. The Soviet people contributed enormously to freeing the peoples of France, Belgium and other occupied countries from the fascist yoke, as well as Italy and Germany. Many Soviet citizens fought courageously in the antifascist Resistance of various countries.

Patriots of Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Greece, Albania, France, Norway, Italy and other countries, all fought for the common cause. On the Soviet-German front Polish and Czechoslovak army units fought against the fascist hordes, and towards the end of the war Romanian and Bulgarian

units joined in. The people of China, Korea, Vietnam and other countries fought against the Japanese in Asia. The troops of the Mongolian People's Republic fought alongside the Red Army against militarist Japan, and people of Africa and Latin America fought a national liberation struggle.

Powerful revolutionary processes which developed during and after the war, brought about a break in the imperialist chain. Thanks to the decisive part played by the Soviet people in the defeat of German fascism and Japanese militarism, international conditions favoured a victory for revolutions in a number of European and Asian countries. 11 states with a population of over 700 million people broke away from the capitalist system. Socialism spread beyond the boundaries of a single country to form a world socialist system. This, together with the break-up of colonialism under the blows of the national liberation movement, was evidence of the root changes in the balance of forces between two opposing social systems. The economic and political conditions of the international bourgeoisie were seriously undermined.

A direct result of the decisive contribution made by the working class in the struggle for freedom and independence of the peoples, was its increased role and influence on the socio-political life both in individual countries and on an international scale.

The working class with its communist vanguard led in the building of socialism in those countries which had broken away from the capitalist system. In developed capitalist states the labour movement strengthened considerably. The younger generation of the labour movement of newly liberated, dependent and colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America entered the international arena.

Communist parties became more influential and their political maturity grew. Drawing on the experience and decisions of the Communist International and on the experience of struggle in the Resistance movement, Communists worked out a strategy of struggle for broad democratic changes, linking them with socialist perspectives. Communist parties, particularly in countries such as France and Italy, became mass parties, and their influence on political affairs and formation of politics grew. In 10 capitalist countries, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Austria and Chile, Communists were members of government in the first post-war years and endeavoured to bring about progressive home and foreign policies. In some countries unity was achieved between Communists and Socialists. Thanks to working-class actions, broad sections of working people succeeded in winning important reforms in economic and socio-political spheres. On an international scale and within individual countries, united democratic trade unions and mass public organisations were established for the first time.

The change in the balance of forces between socialism and capitalism increasingly affected the entire political and ideological situation in the post-war world. It influenced the progress of the class struggle and the changed relations between the social and political forces in the capitalist countries. The growth of the international communist and labour movement and its transformation into an influential force in historical development were exceptionally significant in hastening the revolutionary process. Communists brought in motion powerful social forces and stimulated the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

THE LEADING FORCE OF THE NEW EPOCH

The period from the 1920s through the 1940s occupies a special place in history owing to the scale of the events which took place, and their relevance to the fate of humankind.

The building of socialism in the USSR was an event of worldwide significance confirming as it did the profound justice of Marxist-Leninist analysis concerning the historically conditioned transition from capitalism to socialism. The Soviet working class, which was in the forefront of the international labour movement and created a new, socialist world, paved the way into the future.

The example of the Soviet working class which proved that the contradictions of capitalism could be overcome and its social evils abolished, gave a new, powerful stimulus to the development of the labour movement in capitalist countries. Thanks to the increasing influence of the communist parties among the masses, the level of working-class struggle reached a higher plane. Although the working class was unable to halt the emergence and spread of fascism, the efforts of Communists in creating a mass anti-fascist movement based on the Popular Front platform contributed significantly to the organisation of resistance to fascist reaction. Indeed, it was the Popular Fronts which struck the first blows against fascism, and this, in turn, raised the prestige of the working class as the leader of the democratic forces. The participation of the working class in the struggle against colonial oppression enabled it to become an influential force in the national liberation movement.

The decisive contribution made by the first workers' state to the destruction of the fascist grouping of imperialism and the leading role of the working class in the anti-fascist war of liberation were all proof of the enhanced status of the working class as the leading force in world developments.

These worldwide historical achievements of the working class

were conclusive evidence of the organic unity between the social liberation of the workers and humanity's progress in general. They *finally determined the role of the working class as the leading force of the new historical epoch* opened up by the October Revolution.

The period under review was marked by new considerable victories of Marxism-Leninism. The creation of the world's first socialist society resolved the historical debate in favour of the Leninist theory of socialist revolution. Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics were substantially enriched by communist activities and the class struggles in the period of temporary partial stabilisation of capitalism, the anti-war and anti-fascist struggle of the working class during the economic crisis of 1929-1933, its experience as the leading force in the anti-fascist liberation war, and its role in the national liberation movement. This also includes the efforts to achieve working-class unity and rally around it other democratic forces and to align the working-class struggle with the national liberation movement.

LAYING THE PATH TO THE FUTURE

Frederick Engels, in defining the role of socialism in history, emphasised: "The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom."¹ With the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, this forecast by Engels became reality.

The ways and means to build socialism in the Soviet Union were worked out in the course of a most extreme ideological battle against Trotskyism, which had become the focus of an anti-party bloc, uniting diverse anti-socialist forces. Trotsky and his supporters prophesied the downfall of the dictatorship of the proletariat due to the inevitably, according to them, hostile actions of the peasantry which constituted the majority of the population. Trotsky maintained that it was impossible to build socialism in the USSR without "direct state support" by the Western proletariat, and on this basis proposed the adventurist course of prodding the world revolution by all and every means, not excluding that of war.² Trotsky's views found fertile soil among some party members who, in essence, displayed petty-bourgeois inconsistency and confusion when faced

¹ Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 149-50.

² *Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, Moscow, 1969, p. 257-58 (in Russian).

with the difficulties and peculiarities of the revolutionary struggle in new circumstances.

Later, the Trotskyites, expelled from the communist parties, completely exposed themselves as a trend which, hiding behind pseudo-left phraseology, conducted, and still conducts, a violent struggle against real socialism and the communist movement. Bourgeois ideologists have for a long time made use of Trotskyism in order to divide the revolutionary and democratic movements, slander the Soviet Union and the communist parties, and discredit Leninism.

The defeat of Trotskyism, therefore, eliminated the obstacles to realising the creative tasks of the socialist revolution. It also had much wider repercussions in the ideological development of the international working class, the consolidation of the world communist movement based on Leninism, and the elaboration of a consistent revolutionary policy in conditions of the general crisis of capitalism. The defeat of Trotskyism became an important landmark in the growth of the ideological and political maturity and the consolidation of the ranks of the international communist movement.

The building of socialism in the USSR also dealt a serious blow to bourgeois ideology. It demonstrated the ability of the working class to create a new, higher type of civilisation, proving in practice the historical limitations of the bourgeoisie so far as the development of productive forces in society and social progress were concerned.

The successes achieved during the building of socialism led to positive ideological changes in the consciousness of broad democratic circles. William Z. Foster, an American communist leader wrote (referring to the results of the First Five-Year Plan): "The campaign of lies against the USSR had received a body blow. It was the first real challenge that the new socialist system, emerging from fifteen years of imperialist war, civil war, capitalist blockade, and economic reconstruction, had been able to make to the dominant world capitalist system."¹

The truth about the Soviet Union confidently blazed a trail throughout the whole world. The impressions of well-known personalities in the world of culture who had visited the Soviet Union made a big impact on society. In 1930, Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian humanist, writer and poet, wrote: "The art that flourishes on the Russian stage displays ceaseless courage of new creation. This daring of new creation too is active in their social revolution. In society, politics, art, nowhere have they feared the new."² George Bernard Shaw said: "In all the prophecies of Russia's failure the

¹ William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, New York, 1951, p. 406.

² Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters from Russia*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 60.

wish is father to the thought. We have a lot of foolish people who want the experiment to fail. They may take it from me it is not going to. Russia is all right and we are all wrong."¹ H.G. Wells, visiting the Soviet Union in 1934, said that the "fruitful ideas of Lenin continue to be influential even after their creator has ceased to create".² The German poet Johannes Becher wrote that the socioeconomic achievements of the Soviet Union were "a great force, revitalising humanity", the source of progress "transforming old humankind into new"³.

Typical of the views of progressive intellectuals was the publication of "Culture and the Crisis," signed by Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson and other well-known American writers and journalists. In particular they concluded that "It is capitalism which is destructive of all culture and Communism which desires to save civilisation and its cultural heritage from the abyss to which the world crisis is driving it."⁴

The successful economic development in the USSR which occurred against a background of economic upheavals in the capitalist world during the 1930s, gave rise to a real crisis of attitudes in the reformist stream of the working-class movement. Otto Bauer, a prominent leader of the Austrian Socialists and international social democracy, who in his time had condemned the Great October Socialist Revolution, stated: "International social democracy regarded the attempt to establish a socialist order of society in backward Russia as a utopian adventure. It held that this attempt would collapse in a very short time. All these opinions have today been proved false by history itself. In the Soviet Union a socialist society is in the making." He spoke of the necessity to overcome "the common philistine dogmatic prejudices against the Soviet Union, which can still be found within reformist socialism".⁵ Otto Bauer considered that the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union obliged social democracy to change its policy and work for a rapprochement with the Communists.

There was a big response in the labour movement and society in general to the publication in 1935 of *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* by the Fabian Socialists Beatrice and Sidney Webb. In this book they showed that a new, higher type of civilisation had been built in the Soviet Union. Referring to the future development

¹ *Daily Worker*, 4 August 1931, p. 1.

² *The World and the Republic of Soviets*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 258-59 (in Russian).

³ *Through the Eyes of Foreigners. 1917-1932*, Moscow, 1932, pp. 253-54 (in Russian).

⁴ *Culture and the Crisis*, New York, October 1932, p. 30.

⁵ O. Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen? Die Krise der Weltwirtschaft, der Demokratie und des Sozialismus*, Bratislava, 1936, pp. 193, 286, 326.

of humanity, they wrote: "Will this new civilisation, with its abandonment of the incentive of profit-making, its extinction of unemployment, its planned production for community consumption, and the consequent liquidation of the landlord and the capitalist, spread to other countries? Our own reply is: 'Yes, it will.'"¹

However, the successes of socialism in the USSR, also gave rise to an intensification, internationally, of the ideological battle in relation to the basic contradiction of the epoch.

Prior to the victory of socialism in the USSR, bourgeois ideologists referred to historical experience to prove the "eternal" nature of bourgeois society. But now a new experience confronted them, and one which favoured the working class. In their struggle against socialism, bourgeois ideologists increasingly resorted to absolute distortion of historical events and facts, to lies; and eclecticism became a feature of bourgeois ideas. It became increasingly popular in bourgeois literature to use the main argument of the opportunists which justified their renunciation of the revolution, by claiming that Soviet society was not socialist. "It will have become obvious by now that Soviet socialism (or communism) proves nothing about the nature of socialism (or communism) as a socio-political doctrine. Soviet practice merely testifies to the conditions of Russia."² Thus wrote the American professor Th. von Laue.

While in the first half of the 1920s a considerable section of the social-reformist leaders and ideologists condemned (at any rate in words) the aggressive actions of imperialism in relation to the Soviet Union, in the late 1920s the majority of them in fact supported anti-Soviet plans of the bourgeoisie, and the anti-communist struggle waged in defence of the bourgeois system.³ Dealing with the reasons for this evolution, the British historian G.D.H. Cole wrote: "The Socialists of the western countries ... look with mixed feelings on the success of Russian Communism... They are apt to see in the success of Communism in Russia the danger of further strengthening in their own countries of the forces which threaten the disruption of the parties... On the other hand, they are believers in Socialism, and they are therefore profoundly attracted to the one large-scale experiment in socialist organisation the world has yet seen. Torn between these two points of view, they come down some on one side and some on the other, or try as long as they can to avoid coming

¹ S. and B. Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?*, Vol. II, London, 1935, p. 114.

² Th. von Laue, *Why Lenin? Why Stalin?*, Philadelphia and New York, 1964, p. 218.

³ K. Kautsky, *Le bolshevisme dans l'impasse*, Paris, 1931; L. Laurat, *L'économie soviétique*, Paris, 1931; O. Rosenfeld, *Le Plan quinquennal*, Paris, 1931; E. Vandervelde, *L'alternative: capitalisme d'état ou socialisme démocratique*, Paris, 1933.

down decisively on either side."¹ Therefore, anti-Sovietism could be maintained in the social democratic parties only at the expense of future and still more deliberate withdrawal from the socialist aims of the movement.

A somewhat similar evolution was made by ultra-left trends, a considerable section of whom used arguments borrowed from the Trotskyites.

Adherence to anti-Sovietism unites the most diverse trends in historiography: from the bourgeois-conservative defenders of capitalism, to the ultra-left who claim to be more revolutionary than Communists. Such a common outlook unmistakably proves that the attitude to the Soviet Union is the focus of the battle of ideas between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

The evolution of the views of bourgeois historians on the *problems of economic construction in the USSR* is most revealing.

Professor F.L. Schuman of the USA wrote: "Since nothing of the kind had ever before been attempted [industrialisation in the USSR] most Western observers were confident at the outset that the effort must fail. When confounded by its striking success, they often sought to 'explain' what was clearly incredible in ways indicative of confused resentment rather than of accurate insight."²

The achievements of the Soviet Union exposed the basic error of bourgeois ideologists who regarded the laws of development of capitalist economics as absolute. Bourgeois researchers prefer either to ignore these achievements, or maintain their views by falsifying the meaning of the process of socialist construction.

While in the early 1930s bourgeois historians openly condemned the socialist principles on which Soviet economy was organised, the successes of the first five-year plans prompted them to try and pass over in silence or even deny the socialist character of the USSR's economy.³ In contemporary bourgeois literature acknowledgement of any achievements in the industrialisation of the USSR are increasingly linked with a picture of this process as a belated variant of capitalist industrialisation. The English historian Arnold Toynbee reduces the content of economic construction in the USSR to the preservation of the country's independence "by putting itself through a 'crash' programme of technological westernisation".⁴ Declaring that the Soviet experience of economic development does not apply to developed capitalist countries, bourgeois writers state that at

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos*, London, 1932, pp. 566, 567.

² F. L. Schuman, *Russia since 1917*, New York, 1957, p. 330.

³ *Revolutionary Russia*, Ed. by R. Pipes, Cambridge (Mass.), 1968.

⁴ *The Impact of the Russian Revolution 1917-1967. The Influence of Bolshevism on the World Outside Russia*, London, 1967, p. 8.

best "to the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America the Soviet Union presents an example of how a nation can mature economically in a rapid manner".¹

The successes of socialist industrialisation and the growth in the prestige of socialism forced bourgeois historians to search for new arguments in order to discredit the USSR.

Thus, by ignoring the differences in the class nature of socialist and capitalist industrialisation, the myth of the "high" cost of industrialisation in the USSR still persists. The American historian, Sidney Hook, asserts that capitalist industrialisation achieved better results with less cost to society than socialist industrialisation. In the words of the American researcher C.E. Black, "The Soviet leaders have increased industrial production in Russia substantially, and they have modernised it in other respects as well, but they have achieved this at the highest relative human cost previously experienced by a modernising society."²

Actually, the comparison made of the social aims and results of socialist industrialisation with capitalist industrialisation reveals the falsity of these assertions. Under capitalist conditions, industrialisation was accompanied by an appalling intensification of exploitation and a sharpening of class antagonisms, while the growth of productive forces went parallel with the most rapacious treatment of society's most precious asset, the health and lives of the working people. Harsh conditions of labour, the use of child labour, trade in human beings and even slavery, the absolute impoverishment of the workers, and the growth in the mortality rate—such was the other side of the technical-economic successes of capitalist industrialisation. The words of the English bourgeois economist Bernard Mandeville who cynically stated: "In order to make society happy, it is essential that there be many unhappy and poor people"³ reflected the general view of the pioneers of capitalist industrialisation, who declared that poverty and suffering of the working people was the basis for "the social good".

In his time, Frederick Engels wrathfully accused capitalism: "When it [society] deprives thousands of the necessities of life, places them under conditions in which they *cannot* live—forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence—knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these

¹ A. Grucky, *Comparative Economic Systems. Competing Ways to Stability and Growth*, Boston, 1966, p. 796.

² C. E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernisation. A Study in Comparative History*, New York—Evanston—London, 1966, p. 146.

³ E. H. Carr, *The New Society*, London, 1951, p. 45.

conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder."¹

The justice of this accusation is confirmed by undeniable facts. Beatrice and Sidney Webb acknowledged that: "We are apt to forget the terrible record of the virtual enslavement, by the thousand, of little children in the new textile factories; the actual purchase of orphans (with 'one idiot among every twenty') by the millowners from the parish vestries and Poor Law Guardians; the young boys and girls working naked in the coal mines; the indescribable state of the prisons and the general mixed workhouses; the paupers arbitrarily deported to their places of settlement; the daily slaughter and maiming of workers of all ages, by wholly preventable 'accidents' from the machinery that it was too expensive to fence; and the incredible insanitation, generation after generation, of the new industrial centres, all of which, as we can now recognise, formed, in the nineteenth century, a frightful background to the brilliant coronation of the young Queen Victoria."²

On the contrary, in the course of socialist industrialisation the exploitation of man by man, social inequality, unemployment and class antagonisms were all abolished. In the 1930s the mortality rate, as compared with 1914, fell by a half, wages rose steadily, and the most advanced system of social insurance in the world was introduced. In other words, during socialist industrialisation, the prerequisites for a new, higher type of civilisation, came into being. By ignoring the qualitative difference of socialist industrialisation from all others, it is impossible to make an objective assessment of its actual significance, of its role in social development.

The class implication of bourgeois criticism of the socialist transformations in industry and in agriculture is clearly exposed by the particular virulence with which bourgeois historians condemn the policy of the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, and describe it as a "war" against the peasantry. In reality, this policy was implemented with the support of broad peasant masses and by them since the kulaks represented one of the most evil types of exploiter, and roused keen hatred of the working peasantry. Despite the hopes of the anti-socialist forces, the liquidation of the kulaks did not make the peasantry hostile to socialism. On the contrary, it assisted in the creation of a socio-political community in the countryside.

The fear aroused by the revolutionary influence of the Soviet experience can be felt in the assessment of the international significance of socialist construction made by bourgeois and right-wing social democratic historians. The West German Social Democrat

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Condition of the Working Class in England", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 395.

² S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 597-98.

Richard Löwenthal claims that the experience of socialist construction in the Soviet Union "began to appear increasingly irrelevant to the needs of the working classes of advanced industrial societies".¹

These assertions, in such glaring contradiction to obvious facts, give rise to objections by some bourgeois historians who urge that full account should be taken of the facts.

Speaking about industrialisation in the USSR, F.L. Schuman wrote: "What is unique in the USSR is that a single decade saw developments that required half a century or more elsewhere... A staggering human reality is mirrored but faintly in the obvious generalisations: the adventure led from illiteracy to literacy, from the NEP to socialism, from archaic agriculture to collective cultivation, from a rural society to a predominantly urban community, from general ignorance of the machine to social mastery of modern technology."² "The Soviet economic advance since 1928 has been one of the dominant facts of our time," is recognised, for instance, by the American bourgeois historian, Alexander Erlich.³

The achievements of socialist economy strengthened the belief of the workers that capitalist exploitation could be abolished, and that economic development could be subordinated to the needs of society, thereby assisting in strengthening the world revolutionary forces. G.D.H. Cole pointed out that the successful fulfilment of the five-year plans not only meant that the socialist political system was strengthened in a large and important part of the world, but it also stimulated the ideas of people living in other countries, who had reason to be dissatisfied with the capitalist system.

During the construction of socialism, the principles of the sanctity of private ownership and the idea that social inequality could not be abolished were both refuted by experience, and the socialist principles of economic organisation, now realised in practice, began to influence the minds, not only of working people, but also wider strata of the population, undermining their former worship of private property.

The idea that it was imperative to limit the rights of private property penetrated deep into the consciousness of the broad masses. Influenced by the social progress taking place in the USSR, the determination of the workers to stand up for their social and economic demands grew immeasurably. This tendency became particularly pronounced in the 1930s, when the capitalist world was hit by an unprecedented economic crisis. During previous economic crises, capital relatively easily compelled the people to bear the enormous

¹ *The Impact of the Russian Revolution. 1917-1967...*, p. 292.

² F. L. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, pp. 144-45.

³ A. Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialisation Debate 1924-1928*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1960, p. XX.

human and material sacrifices involved, because no one knew of other, less demanding, paths to economic development. However, in the 1930s, the example of the crisis-free growth of the socialist economy demolished this argument of the bourgeoisie. The unprecedented intensity, at a time of crisis, of the strike struggle, the unemployed workers' movement, the hunger marches, and mass actions of workers, all constituted serious opposition to the onslaught of capital and reaction.

In bourgeois and social democratic literature it is usual to describe the socio-economic gains of the working class in capitalist countries solely as the result of the far-sightedness of the bourgeoisie and the effective actions of the reformist social democratic leaders. However, these gains would have been considerably more modest had there not been the example of socialist construction in the USSR. Even the ideologists of right-wing social democracy cannot deny that the example of the Soviet Union and the fear "of its possible influence on the European countries prompted the ruling classes to make concessions to the organised labour movement".¹

As their hopes of the failure of the Soviet economy declined, bourgeois ideologists began to put forward the theory that the Soviet Union's economic successes were achieved at the expense of democracy and political freedoms. In bourgeois literature the cliché "Soviet totalitarian model" became established, supplanting an analysis of the socialist state.

The victory of socialism in the USSR fully revealed the superiority of *socialist democracy*. However, bourgeois historians carefully avoid any mention of this, and categorically pronounce any difference in the juridical norms of socialist democracy from those of bourgeois democracy as evidence of an "undemocratic" nature of Soviet society.

The ideological and political consolidation of Soviet society during the construction of socialism, the growing role of the state and the Communist Party in the administration of society are presented in bourgeois literature as a process which curtails and even abolishes democracy. The Italian historian Giacomo Perticone falsely asserts that in the early days "Russian communism" used democratic measures "but then threw them on the scrapheap".² Since they cannot be certain that their assertions will be accepted as scientifically correct, bourgeois historians appeal to prejudices nourished by a belief in the absolute nature of bourgeois democracy.

From their point of view, the disappearance of a political opposition in the USSR destroyed democracy, since it led to the absence of "political pluralism" which is regarded as the absolute criterion

¹ *Rote Markierungen. Beiträge zur Ideologie und Praxis der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, Vienna, 1972, p. 142.

² Giacomo Perticone, *Storia del Socialismo*, Vol. 2; Rome, 1974, p. 518.

of "pure" democracy without any regard for its class content or the prevailing historical circumstances. In actual fact, "political pluralism" and multi-party system as attributes of bourgeois democracy are historical phenomena born of the intensity of the class war. The bourgeoisie regarded the legalisation of political differences as a small price to pay for preserving its political domination.

The multi-party system which offers the democratic forces certain opportunities of political influence within a capitalist framework, is far from being able to ensure genuine democracy. G.D.H. Cole pointed to the objective impossibility of a two-party system (as well as a multi-party one) leaving the confines of bourgeois political rule, and making a fundamental democratic change. He wrote: "If two parties which disagree about fundamentals are to alternate in office and opposition, it is plain that each of them will spend most of its time undoing the acts of its predecessor."¹

Soviet democracy took shape in different circumstances. The winning of political power by the working class and the socialist transformation of society were accompanied by a sharpening of the class struggle caused by the desperate opposition of the exploiting classes. However, with the abolition of the latter, and the creation of the socio-political unity of socialist society, the dominant relationship between the classes was that of unity and cooperation. This laid the basis for the further extension of democracy. The limitations of political rights affecting certain sections of society, which after bourgeois revolutions lasted for decades and even centuries, were abolished in the Soviet Union within a mere 19 years after the Great October Socialist Revolution. But the main point is that the extension of democratic rights and freedoms occurs in bourgeois society in conditions of a sharpening class struggle and is a concession forced on the ruling class by the demands of the democratic and workers' movement, while in the Soviet Union this reflected the political consolidation of a society which had abolished the objective basis for the existence of political and inner-party oppositions.

Bourgeois researchers themselves acknowledge that the unity between government and the people achieved in the course of socialist construction had hitherto been unknown in the history of class society. In the course of the Soviet five-year plans, writes Th. von Laue, "the government and the people were now in alignment, the people integrated into the state, and both government and people set to work with breath-taking single-mindedness on the tasks of economic modernisation".²

The recognition that the political unity of Soviet society is rooted

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *The Intelligent Man's Guide through World Chaos*, p. 604.

² Th. von Laue, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

in its objective social origin proves how groundless are bourgeois Sovietologists' claims that the absence of a multi-party system in the USSR is evidence of its lack of democracy. The political history of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries shows that in specific historical conditions, after the proletariat has won power and during socialist construction, a multi-party system can exist, but within a framework which guarantees socialist democracy.

Bourgeois historians who regard bourgeois democracy as the ultimate form of government close their eyes to the actual processes of strengthening people's power in the USSR, which represents a qualitative leap in the development of democracy. The victory of socialist production relations not only ensured social and economic equality, but also broadened the workers' participation in the administration of the state.

Millions of workers and peasants are drawn in to help solve economic, political and cultural problems, to work on production plans at their enterprises and institutions, to control their performance, etc. The unheard-of scale of conscious participation by working people in the creation of a new society opened up new areas of socialist democracy.

All aspects of life were organised on genuinely democratic principles and working people became the real masters in socialist society. The leading role of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class made it possible to achieve a unity of economic, political and ideological factors in the management of social processes which assured an overwhelming advantage of socialist organisation over capitalist.

The growth of the leading role of the communist party as the bearer of socialist consciousness was a reflection of the further broadening of democracy. Notwithstanding the slanderous lies of bourgeois historians the party leadership is profoundly democratic by its very nature, since it is based, primarily, on the party's prestige among the masses. "Soviet power," wrote Lenin, "is nothing but an organisational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the advanced class, which raises to a new democracy and to independent participation in the administration of the state tens upon tens of millions of working and exploited people, who by their own experience learn to regard the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat as their most reliable leader."¹

The attempts of bourgeois historians to suggest that the infringements of legality during the period of the Stalin personality cult were determined by the nature of the political development of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1965, p. 265.

Soviet society are nothing more than lies. These infringements, which did considerable harm to Soviet society, could not, however, hinder the democratic activity of the masses, without which the successful building of socialism would be unthinkable.

The impact of the example of Soviet democracy on social processes throughout the world cannot be overestimated. The truth about the impressive achievements reached other countries and attracted millions more to socialism.

Working people throughout the world saw in the Soviet state the embodiment of their ideas of a just society. In this context Harold Laski, leader of the British Labour Party, wrote: "What the working classes of the world see in Russia is less what its revolution denies than what it affirms. They see a State which, with all its faults and weaknesses, seems to them to lie at the service of men like themselves. They recognise in the demands it makes, and the principles to which it gives allegiance, their own demands and principles... To the workers...the things of import are the facts that all must toil, that communal experiment is in the interest of the masses, that no one is preferred save in terms of principle."¹

The working people of other countries were grasping the social essence of Soviet democracy. E.H. Carr wrote, "Democracy does not break the economic stranglehold of the employer over the worker; and freedom of the press and of public assembly does not in fact mean that equal opportunity is available for the expression of all opinions... The Soviet challenge had spread and quickened the realisation of these shortcomings and, in so doing, has largely contributed to the recent weakening of popular faith in the democratic institutions of the western world."²

The fact that in the Soviet Union power could be used in the interests of the people intensified the desire of the workers in capitalist countries to fight for political power and encouraged their involvement in the battle for democracy. This, in turn, was instrumental in that broad sections of the population came to support working-class demands. The importance attached to social demands in the programmes of the popular national liberation fronts and in the anti-fascist Resistance movement proved that the slogan for social equality was supported by broad democratic sections of the people. Consequently, the very concept, the meaning of democracy was being deepened. The struggle for democracy strengthened the anti-capitalist tendencies, for social equality cannot be achieved without limiting and eventually abolishing the power of capital.

¹ H. Laski, *Communism*, London, 1927, pp. 242-43.

² E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, London, 1947, pp. 12-13.

The increased danger of fascism showed clearly what could be expected in the absence of genuine equality under conditions of bourgeois democracy. G.D.H. Cole wrote that the absence of equality, or the consciousness of its absence, to a considerable extent sapped democracy in the western countries, despite their formal adherence to universal suffrage.¹ There was, on the one hand, an influential section of the bourgeoisie which relied on fascism; on the other, there were the workers who, seeing the flimsy nature of bourgeois democracy, were increasingly disinclined to act in its defence, and tended nihilistically to deny the existence of bourgeois democratic freedoms.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's experience proved that only the expansion of democracy which accorded with the genuine interests of society and the majority of the working people, could protect it from the attacks of its enemies. This example further charted the path to effective counteraction against reactionary tendencies, which became more powerful in conditions of the crisis of bourgeois democracy.

Finally, the contribution made by the Soviet working class to the *cultural and ideological development of society* is inestimable. The scope of the Soviet Union's cultural achievements has made nonsense of the myth concocted by bourgeois propagandists that "Bolshevism destroys culture". The majority of contemporary bourgeois historians who find themselves unable to deny the achievements of the cultural revolution in the USSR, rely chiefly on distortion. In non-Marxist historiography the dominant tendency is to deny the qualitative difference between socialist and capitalist cultures. The West German Sovietologist Dietrich Geyer asserts for instance that cultural development in the Soviet Union has simply amounted to the restoration of bourgeois culture.² Often Soviet culture is described as a variation of old bourgeois culture adapted to the needs of a "totalitarian" society.³

The criticism of socialist ideology is especially malicious. As a general rule, bourgeois historians substitute serious comparative analysis of bourgeois and socialist ideology, its correlation with the concrete socio-political development of socialist and bourgeois society, with abstract discourse on the superiority of the "ideology of individualism" over the "ideology of collectivism".

However, all these abstract arguments crumble to dust as they are projected on the realities of the historical process. There is a historical basis to the progressive meaning of bourgeois individual-

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *Europe, Russia and the Future*, New York, 1942.

² *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1962, Part 1, p. 55.

³ See, for example, N. A. Riasanovsky, *History of Russia*, New York, 1963, pp. 626-27.

ism. The true significance of the capitalist formula that "the individual is above society" amounts to sustaining the privileged position of the owners of the means of production. "Individualism" writes Carr, "really meant the claim of outstanding individuals to be different, to distinguish themselves by their attainments, and by the enjoyment of corresponding privileges, from the undifferentiated mass of common men. But for the ordinary worker individual freedom to choose his job seems largely illusory when its complement is freedom to starve. To have no social obligation to work might seem a boon; but it might be purchased at too high a price if society in its turn has no obligation to provide for the workless."¹

Real socialism has proved in practice that genuine humanism is not to be found in propagating the principle that the interests of the individual are above those of society, but in the responsibility of society to create for every individual conditions for his or her all-round development. Having abolished the exploitation of man by man, socialism has proved that a genuine humanistic morality can only be created if it is based on the recognition of the inter-relation of social and individual interests. In socialist society the concern for the social good is the most important condition for the all-round development of the individual, and concern for the individual the highest aim of the state.

The building of socialism makes particularly great demands on the level of consciousness of the working people. In exploiting societies the material interest of the ruling class was the main stimulus for economic development. The essential conditions for successful socialist construction were the high level of consciousness of the ruling working class, its ability to put the interests of society's development before its own material interests. Hence, a new type of human being was in the making during the process of bringing culture and knowledge, essential for administering society, to the working people.

The cultural revolution in the Soviet Union was a most important period not only in raising the ideological level of the Soviet working class, but in the ideological development of humankind. "Other communities, especially during the past century or two," wrote the Webbs, "have striven to create educated, and even cultivated classes within the nation. The Soviet Union is the first to strive, without discrimination of sex or race, affluence or position, to produce not merely an intelligentsia but a cultivated nation."²

The creation of a socialist society in the USSR considerably strengthened the ideological stand of the revolutionary proletariat.

¹ E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, p. 99-100.

² S. and B. Webb, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 1128.

While socialism remained an unrealised ideal, the bourgeoisie was able to counter socialist influence considerably, declaring that socialist aims were utopian. The transformations of socialism from theory to reality deprived them of this advantage. Socio-historical practice paved new paths for spreading Marxist-Leninist ideology. The influence of the Soviet Union's achievements opened up wide possibilities for millions to assimilate socialist ideals.

THE LEADER OF FORCES OF REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The triumph of Marxism-Leninism embodied in the historical achievements of the Soviet working class enabled the revolutionary proletariat to become the dominant worldwide ideological force in the epoch leading from capitalism to socialism. The ideological development of the working class was mainly due to the influence of the communist movement. It is precisely for this reason that the communist parties have been the object of virulent attacks by bourgeois and opportunist ideologists.

In former times the bourgeoisie used to condemn the entire socialist movement, but with the growth of communist influence, these criticisms were increasingly directed against its revolutionary wing.

During the First World War and the Great October Socialist Revolution, for the first time bourgeois researchers attempted to cease criticism of certain social-chauvinist and counter-revolutionary labour leaders. They developed a favourable attitude towards the entire reformist trend as the hostility of the social democratic leaders towards the Soviet Union and the communist movement grew.

Alongside, the bourgeoisie abandoned the tactic of a frontal onslaught against the socialist movement in general and adopted a policy aimed at intensifying the divisions between the revolutionary and the reformist trends. For this purpose the reformist labour leaders were being drawn into class collaboration. Bourgeois historians began increasingly to make use of anti-communist arguments formulated by social democratic and ultra-left writers.

A widespread theory in anti-communist literature is that the proletarian revolution cannot be achieved in the world of capitalism. "Only one thing [in Marxism] is certainly not true," wrote one of the pillars of anti-communist historiography, F. Borkenau, "the idea that, at the height of such a crisis, [capitalist] the proletariat will rise and, throwing all the propertied classes into the dust, will take the lead of society, abolish private property in the means of production, and create a regime where there are no more classes. This leading role of the proletariat in the upheavals of our time has proved to be the Utopian element of Marxism... In the West ... the idea of a proletarian revolution proved to be a complete illusion...

In the most developed modern countries all classes and groups are much too 'bourgeois' to make a proletarian revolution a practical proposition."¹

According to Borkenau, in the countries of developed capitalism there are only two paths: fascism or class collaboration "typical of a progressive and evolutionary democracy".² Therefore, he declared, the revolutionary activity of the Comintern was doomed to failure. "The history of the Comintern can be summed up as a series of hopes and disappointments."³

In effect, the majority of social democratic historians discount the prospect of a socialist revolution.

Two arguments to support this idea are given. Firstly, in the period under review no socialist revolutions occurred in the main capitalist countries, and, secondly, in the struggle against fascism and war, the communist parties gave pride of place to tasks of a democratic nature, and not to a socialist revolution.

However, these facts in no way disprove the ideological and political positions of the communist movement. During the 20 years under review the revolutionary movement survived many obstacles. The difficulties easily upset those who accepted the simplified Trotskyite concepts of a world socialist revolution. So far as the Marxist-Leninist parties are concerned, they have always taken into consideration the warnings of Marx on the danger of light-hearted optimism regarding the prospect of a swift and untrammelled victory of future proletarian revolutions.

Karl Marx pointed out that unlike bourgeois revolutions which "storm swiftly from success to success", proletarian revolutions "criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh".⁴

As historical experience proves, the revolutionary process in practice has nothing in common with the bogus schemes of "pure" socialist revolution, which ignore the difficulties of the revolutionary path, artificially tear apart the link between democratic and socialist tasks, and present the socialist revolution as the antithesis of the democratic revolution. "One must not see the socialist revolution," wrote Lenin, "as one battle fought on a single front, imperialism versus socialism. This revolution will constitute an entire epoch of sharp, intense class struggle, all kinds of social upheavals, and a

¹ F. Borkenau, *World Communism. A History of the Communist International*, Michigan, 1962, pp. 420-21.

² Ibid., pp. 421-22.

³ Ibid., p. 413.

⁴ Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, Moscow, 1979, p. 106.

whole number of battles on very different fronts, for the most varied economic and political transformations which had matured and required a complete break with the old relationships.”¹ Lenin emphasised: “Whoever expects a ‘pure’ social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.”²

The historic contribution of Communists was that in enriching the democratic struggle with a social content, they strengthened the democratic forces at a crucial stage when influential sections of the bourgeoisie turned to fascism, and at the same time they strengthened the position of the working class in the struggle for political influence and political power. The development of the class struggle from the 1920s and through the 1940s confirmed the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist view that the world revolutionary process was a combination of the proletarian revolution with the democratic and liberation revolutions, and the course steered by the communist movement for unifying all these streams in the struggle for social progress. Thanks to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, the historic achievements of the first socialist country and its decisive contribution to saving humanity from fascism, the path was opened for the building of a world socialist system and for the strengthening of the democratic forces within the capitalist world, while the colonial system of imperialism entered an ever deeper crisis and moved to its downfall. The main result of this development, the change in the balance of forces in favour of socialism and the working class, is a historical fact which even the most elaborate arguments cannot deny.

It is no accident that anti-communist historians are reluctant to analyse actual events and facts, preferring ready-made clichés presented as axiomatic. One of these is the accusation made by the Social Democrats that Communists split the working class. J. Brauntal wrote that the revolutionary struggle of Communists which divided and weakened the working class was a misfortune for socialism, and in the final analysis for the whole world. Modern bourgeois historians support this viewpoint. The Australian researcher Neil McInnes, for instance, wrote: “It was already foolhardy to attack the western social system in the name of the workers, but to divide the workers and condemn them to a war on two fronts was absurd.”³ “Their [the Communists’] plainest influence has often been to give a bad conscience (and hence a diminished efficacy) to western socialists seeking to come to terms with a system they could no longer hope

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 54, p. 464.

² V. I. Lenin, “The Discussion on Self-Determination. Summed-Up”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1977, p. 356.

³ *The Impact of the Russian Revolution...*, p. 121.

and no longer desire to overthrow.”¹ McInnes recognised something which is not customary to speak openly about in social democratic circles, namely, that the activities of Communists make it more difficult for social democratic leaders to compromise with the bourgeoisie.

So far as the unity of the working class is concerned the social democratic leaders basically took refuge in words about unity to cover up their anti-communist and narrow party interests, in order to undermine the communist movement. Although in the capitalist countries there were no conditions for overcoming the differences between the reformist and revolutionary tendencies, the objective basis for united action of the working class in the struggle for specific social and economic demands was present. The social democratic leaders who collaborated extensively with the bourgeois parties, decisively opposed communist proposals to build the unity of the working class, citing the surviving ideological differences between them. Furthermore, the social democratic leaders took part in repressive measures against the revolutionary trend and joined the bourgeoisie in its hostile attitude towards the Communists.

This attitude of the social democratic leadership narrowed the chances of achieving unity of action of the labour movement, and fostered reciprocal hostility from those workers who inclined to a revolutionary outlook, which encouraged left sectarian mistakes in communist parties. The attempts of anti-communist historians to describe self-criticism in communist ranks as proof of their responsibility for the split within the working-class movement are a falsification. On the contrary, this self-criticism only arose out of the practice of the struggle for unity within the working-class movement. It should be remembered that only the principled stand of the Communist International, which recommended uniting the working class through common actions of the people on specific issues in the social and political struggle, *without* stipulating that existing ideological-political differences be solved first, made it possible to overcome the difficulties of the struggle for the unity of the working class. Although this did not rid the movement of the differences, it was limiting the ability of the bourgeoisie to take advantage of this situation to the detriment of working-class interests.

The programme adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International for practical measures to ensure the unity of the working class and of all anti-fascist forces in the decisive battle for democracy against fascism and war was of historic significance.

Communist parties were the initiators and leading force of the Popular Fronts which played such a significant part in the battle

¹ Ibid., p. 34.

against fascism and war. Those researchers who take account of the facts rate the Popular Front highly. The well-known French historian, J. Deloperrié de Bayac wrote: "To the hysteria of the privileged and the betrayal of the Right, the Popular Front counterposed the rights and the will of the French people in its struggle for justice, for the high esteem of labour and human dignity ... for peace and brotherhood between peoples and nations, for national independence."¹

In general, however, acknowledgement of the achievements of the Popular Front is drowned in the torrent of anti-communist and anti-Soviet falsehoods. Reactionary historians portray the Popular Front as an anarchical mob threatening society and civilisation.² According to them, "Moscow controlled the Popular Front", hoping to "create a very strong international left-wing current, and then finally to control the policy of all non-fascist European countries for the benefit of Russia".³ The reactionaries even try to prove that the creation of the Popular Front alienated groupings of "right anti-fascists in Europe" so sizeable that more favourable conditions arose for the growth of fascism.⁴ Actually, all these lies are intended with hindsight to justify the shameful slogan of reaction "Better Hitler than the Popular Front" which cannot be whitewashed by the most skilful sophistry.

The majority of bourgeois historians do not rely on the acceptability of such odious appraisals but prefer more flexible methods. While forced to acknowledge certain successes of the Popular Front, they make an absolute of its setbacks, intending to prove that this tactic has no future.⁵

Hostility to the Popular Front is also characteristic of some ultra-left historians. The starting point of their criticism is the assertion that the Popular Front prevented the socialist revolution.⁶ Frequently they and revisionists adopt arguments taken from the arsenal of reaction. In this connection F. Claudin is particularly unscrupulous, stating that the Comintern "might prove strong enough to terrify all sections of the bourgeoisie and make them compromise with Germany".⁷

¹ J. Deloperrié de Bayac, *Histoire du Front populaire, 1934-1939*, Paris, 1972, p. 497.

² See, for instance, J. Valdour, *Le désordre ouvrier. La révolution en marche*, Paris, 1937; J. Chastenot, *Histoire de la Troisième République*, Vol. 6, *Déclin de la Troisième. 1931-1938*, Paris, 1962.

³ F. Borkenau, op., cit., p. 424.

⁴ *The Impact of the Russian Revolution...*, p. 125.

⁵ H. Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Malenkov. The History of World Communism*, New York, 1953, p. 178.

⁶ A. Sochy, *Anarcho-Syndikalisten über Bürgerkrieg und Revolution in Spanien*, Darmstadt, 1969, p. 76.

⁷ Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform*, Part I, New York, 1975, p. 184.

The similarity of the views of ultra-left and bourgeois historians is in no way accidental. The gauchist or revisionist who propagates the arguments of reactionary ideologists and the bourgeois who reproaches Communists for "having lost their revolutionary zeal" are both actuated by the same desire to discredit any genuine advance by the revolutionary movement.

Marxist historians, using extensive documentary materials, have proved that the slanderous inventions about "the dictate of Moscow" in the communist movement, are completely groundless. The political line of the Comintern, the Popular Front policy in particular, was the fruit of the collective efforts of all communist parties, the result of correlating and giving a theoretical basis to the experience of the struggle for democracy and socialism, and to bring together all labour and democratic forces.¹ Of genuine scientific interest is the identification of those factors which enabled the communist parties to lead the democratic movement destined to become the bulwark of the struggle against fascism. All preceding political experience of the communist parties was a prelude to their eventual role in the Popular Front movement. In the first place, thanks to its ideological and political independence of the bourgeois viewpoint, the communist movement escaped the demoralising effect of the crisis of bourgeois democracy which considerably weakened the ability of the bourgeois-democratic, and even social democratic parties to oppose fascism and carry out an effective struggle against it. Moreover, the activity of the Communists in the democratic struggle grew enormously. Secondly, Communists, playing the vanguard role in the mass political struggle, which ideologically and politically prepared the ground for the emergence of movements of the Popular Front type, enjoyed the highest prestige among the democratic masses who regarded the Communists as their reliable leaders. Those parties, however, which were accustomed to rely on parliament and other bourgeois democratic institutions, were suspicious of the mass struggle. Therefore, even when the social democratic and bourgeois-democratic parties were in the leadership of the Popular Front, they displayed passivity in organising the mass movement which was the basis of its strength.

In other words, the leading role of Communists in the Popular Front was no accident, as bourgeois historians endeavour to describe it, but reflected the process of the revolutionary proletariat rising to

¹ See, instance, *The Communist International. A Short Historical Outline*, Moscow, 1969; B. M. Leibzon, K. K. Shirinya, *A Turn in the Comintern's Policy*, Moscow, 1975; K. K. Shirinya, *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the Struggle Against Fascism and War (1934-1939)*, Moscow, 1979 (all in Russian).

become the leading force within the democratic movement. The fact that on the eve of the Second World War the Popular Front had not developed everywhere was due, in the first place, to the opposition and hesitation of the social democratic leaders. In 1935, Friedrich Adler, secretary of the Labour and Socialist International, opposing the proposal of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International for joint action said: "The United Front manoeuvre, which was aimed at undermining democracy, has given yet another opportunity to fascism."¹ Although the subsequent victories of the Popular Front movements over reaction contradicted these assertions, non-Marxist historians to this day declare that distrust of Communists was the main reason for the refusal of most social democratic parties to cooperate with Communists in forming the Popular Front. The truth was that the leadership of the Labour and Socialist International was simply unable to agree on their own party attitudes in relation to the struggle against fascism, and so had nothing to contribute to talks with the Comintern leadership. While all the parties within the Comintern were in agreement on the necessity of uniting the working class for struggle against fascism, the adoption of a similar decision by the LSI threatened to tear their organisation apart, since there were various contradictory trends within social democracy on this central problem of political life at that time.

Thus, social democracy was the source of divergence in the working-class and democratic movements. During the Great October and post-October revolutions, reformist social democratic leaders created a split within the working class in defence of "pure" democracy against revolution. In the 1930s the splitting tactics of the social democratic leaders dealt a blow against the cause of democracy which they had sworn to defend.

Another falsehood is their accusations that the Communists stirred the masses through demagoguery in order to discredit their allies within the Popular Front. These accusations have also been decisively refuted by historical facts.

It was not the Communists, but leaders of influential social democratic and other parties who at this decisive moment resorted to revolutionary phrases calculated to "arouse" the masses. In describing the course of the talks on the Popular Front programme in 1935, the deputy general secretary of the SFIO J.-B. Séverac stated: "The Communists, concerned with the creation of as broad a Popular Front as possible, insist on including in the common programme only reforms which can be realised within the framework of capitalist society; Socialists, on the other hand, want to link these reforms

¹ Quoted from J. Braunthal, *History of the International*, Vol. 2, p. 479.

with the higher aims of transforming capitalist society into a collectivist or communist one."¹

In 1935, Léon Blum suggested a clear criterion for an assessment of the moral and political standard for the parties of the Popular Front. He said: "I consider that there is no doubt that unity of action has in itself a strength which will, if need be, guard it from the scheming rivalries and tricks which could weaken it. What I am absolutely certain of is that the popular masses would recoil in horror from anything which would seem to them a fraud or a trap."²

The verdict of the people is known. The masses had the highest regard for the behaviour of the Communists. It is in the 1930s that the membership and influence of the communist parties in France, Spain and other countries rapidly grew.

The setbacks of the Popular Front movements could not wipe out their historic merit. They dealt the first serious blows to fascism and guaranteed considerable social and democratic changes; politically and ideologically prepared the ground for the creation of the subsequent anti-fascist Resistance and national liberation fronts. Even historians who strive to discredit the Popular Front cannot but recognise this. "Various people's liberation fronts," writes Hugh Seton-Watson, "represented a more effective form of the pre-war Popular Fronts."³

The Popular Front was the natural result of the efforts of the communist movement and a reflection of the general rise in the level of the struggle of the masses, united to affect directly the outcome of the main problems of social development.

Anti-communist historians slander and distort the meaning of communist policy in the *national liberation movement*. In the period under review communist parties achieved obvious successes in realising the Leninist internationalist policy in relation to the national liberation movement. These successes disproved bourgeois inventions that Communists are enemies of the movement for national liberation. Therefore, frequently in bourgeois literature there appeared imputations against communist parties implying that their participation in the national liberation movement contradicted the interests of the socialist revolution. Seton-Watson averred that such participation was a sign of the "Communists' lack of principle".⁴ According to the work of French authors, *Histoire Générale du Socialisme*, "In these countries [South-East Asia] communism

¹ *Parti socialiste (SFIO). XXXII Congrès National. Rapports*, Paris, 1935, p. 44.

² *L'Oeuvre de Léon Blum, 1934-1937*, Paris, 1964, p. 182.

³ H. Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Malenkov*, p. 212.

⁴ H. Seton-Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution. A Historical Analysis*, London, 1960, p. 128.

found privileged allies in the socio-political forces which are regarded in the West as reactionary and petty-bourgeois".¹

In this particular question, bourgeois historians demonstrate their unity with the Trotskyites, who affirm that the national liberation struggle diverted the working class from fulfilling its world historic mission. Bourgeois writers welcome such "ultra-revolutionism" as it serves their interests in isolating the national liberation and working-class movements from each other.

However, the unity of these two tendencies was in tune with the times. In the 1920s and 1930s the growth of conflict between the national liberation movement and the imperialist bourgeoisie led to increasingly frequent armed struggle, and in the first place, to the Chinese revolution. In these circumstances even the bourgeois leaders of the national liberation struggle were compelled to seek support from the international working class.

It is significant that social democratic leaders devoted considerable efforts to penetrating the national liberation movements. However, although they spoke of their sympathy with the colonial and dependent nations, they were categorically opposed to any revolutionary methods of struggle. "Disliking revolution at home," G.D.H. Cole wrote about social democratic leaders, "they tended to disapprove of it in colonial or semi-colonial areas".²

It was objective necessity that stimulated the bourgeois nationalist leaders to opt for cooperation with the communist movement as the most consistent force in the struggle against imperialism. The extensive participation of the masses in the national liberation struggle compelled the bourgeois leadership of the national liberation movement to carry out certain social and democratic changes. At the same time, in the course of this struggle the working masses became conscious of the organic link between national independence and the basic interests of the working class, and thereby won support among the peasantry and the middle strata.

THE VANGUARD OF THE ANTI-FASCIST LIBERATION WAR

In reviewing the political consequences of the First World War, V.I. Lenin wrote: "Like any crisis, the war has aggravated deep-seated antagonisms and brought them to the surface, tearing asunder all veils of hypocrisy, rejecting all conventions and deflating all corrupt or rotting authorities."³ The Second World War possessed

¹ *Histoire Général du Socialisme, Tome 3: de 1919 à 1945*, Paris, 1977, p. 639.

² G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. IV, Part II, 1914-1931, London, 1958, pp. 877-78.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Dead Chauvinism and Living Socialism", *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 98.

these qualities in even greater measure. It subjected all classes and parties to a stern test, and made the people more aware of their situation. The working class, which displayed profound understanding of its historical responsibility for the fate of social progress and civilisation, passed this test with honour. It became the leading force of the anti-fascist war. On the other hand, the moral and political prestige of the bourgeoisie declined.

Bourgeois historiography strives in every possible way to ignore this important ideological and political result of the Second World War, regarding it simply as a "violent conflict between states"¹. They lay excessive emphasis on the diplomatic and military aspects of the war, ignoring, as a rule, the decisive role of the socialist country and the working class which transformed the Second World War into a liberatory anti-fascist war. Considerable efforts are made to minimise the significant role of the Soviet Union. Even ironic comments come into play. When Hitler's troops invaded the Soviet Union the spiteful J. Braunthal declared: "The 'unjust war' of yesterday now became a 'just war'; the 'imperialist war' became a 'struggle for freedom'."²

However, these ironic remarks missed their target. Without an understanding of those aspects which transformed an imperialist war into an anti-fascist war of liberation it is impossible to understand either the policy of "appeasement" of the fascist aggressor which had been conducted by the Western powers, or the character of the phoney war. Without this knowledge it is impossible to explain the easy war victories of the Nazi armed forces in the West, nor the meaning of the drastic turn-about in the war after the attack on the Soviet Union.

The decisive role of the Soviet Union in changing the whole character of the war was determined by very important factors. In the first place, Soviet participation ensured the anti-fascist nature of the efforts of the anti-Hitler coalition. Secondly, it was on the Soviet-German front that the outcome of the war was decided. The Soviet Union, which bore the main blows of the fascist grouping, made the most decisive contribution to its defeat. This is confirmed by most authoritative statements of Western political leaders, above all by Winston Churchill himself in the British Parliament on 2 August 1944.

"It is the Russian army", said Churchill, "which has done the main work of ripping the guts out of the German Army... There was no force in the world which could have been called into being except after several more years that would have been able to maul and

¹ *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 28, New York, 1968, p. 321.

² J. Braunthal, *History of the International*, Vol. II, p. 526.

break the German Army and subject it to such terrible slaughter and manhandling as has fallen upon the Germans by the Russian Soviet armies."¹

The US Secretary of State, Edward R. Stettinius wrote: "The American people should remember that they were on the brink of disaster in 1942. If the Soviet Union had failed to hold on its front, the Germans would have been able to overrun Great Britain. They could have seized Africa, too, and in this event they could have established a foothold in Latin America."²

Nor can bourgeois historians deny the leading role of Communists in the anti-fascist liberation war, widely recognised in circles far removed from communism. One of the members of the Free National Committee based in London, P. Aglion wrote: "The French communists ... played a most important part in the Resistance movement."³ The political editor of the influential French newspaper *Le Monde*, Hubert Beuve-Méry described the Communists as "the marching wing of the Resistance"⁴.

However, in the overwhelming mass of research material on the Resistance movement, there is not the slightest sign of a scientific explanation of these facts. Bourgeois writers, and sometimes those of the social democratic movement, frequently content themselves with references to coincidences, and some even stoop to slander. Thus, the former General Secretary of the SFIO, Daniel Mayer, tried to prove that the unparalleled heroism of the Communists in the anti-fascist struggle was a sign of their "primitivism" of sorts, stating that they "carried out orders, were ready to die if asked or when circumstances demanded it. For them it was part of their primitive adherence to principles. For the others [non-Communists] it was a different matter... their loyalty was thought out."⁵

The vanguard role of the Soviet Union, of the international working class, in the anti-fascist liberation struggle reflected the profound natural law of the development of society in the new historical epoch.

The fact that the bourgeoisie was unable to become the leader of the liberation forces during the war was due to the natural evolution of this class in the epoch of the decline of capitalism. Influential sections sometimes gave direct support to fascism. The official publication of the US State Department stated that French patriotism had been paralysed by class hatred to such an extent that some business and political leaders thought more of their purses than the

¹ W. M. Mandel, *A Guide to the Soviet Union*, New York, 1946, p. 136.

² E. R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, New York, 1949, p. 7.

³ P. Aglion, *The Fighting French*, New York, 1943, p. 251.

⁴ H. Beuve-Méry, *Réflexions politique*, Paris, 1951, p. 152.

⁵ D. Mayer, *Les socialistes dans la Résistance*, Paris, 1968, p. 114.

fate of the country. They constituted the "fifth column", comprised of those who preferred to collaborate with Hitler and were even prepared for fascist rule in France. Even those bourgeois circles who fought against fascism continued to display considerable doubts, and made it difficult to take advantage of the opportunities to organise the struggle.

In the Resistance, the bourgeois quarters relying on the support of the British and American governments adopted, as a rule, the tactic of "wait and see". They opposed drawing broad masses of the people into the anti-fascist war, opposed active armed struggle, and even more so a general armed uprising.

The Anglo-American Allied Command demanded that all involved in the Resistance who were not under its direct control should cease fighting. General Eisenhower's message to the French people was: "Every one of you should carry on your normal work, unless you receive other orders."¹

It was natural that as the anti-fascist struggle expanded so the influence of bourgeois parties and organisations which opposed such developments, decreased.

The British journalist and historian Alexander Werth quite correctly links the leading role of the Communists in the Resistance movement with the activity of the working class in the anti-fascist struggle, and quotes the French writer François Mauriac as follows: "Only the working class *as a whole* remained faithful to France in her distress and humiliation." In recognising the prestige of the Communists Werth wrote: "Many non-Communists could not help admiring the singlemindedness and the courage of the communists in the Resistance."² Of considerable interest is the assessment by a prominent leader of the Left Catholic movement, Jean-Marie Domenach, who said that the behaviour of nearly all the Communists in 1941-1944 was characterised by a contempt for death and torture. Many other Frenchmen displayed similar bravery, but no other organisation showed this bravery so fully and to such an extent that it became more of a collective than an individual quality.³

However, it is necessary to emphasise that the moral and ideological superiority of the Communists was displayed in a policy which in the highest degree accorded with the aims of the anti-fascist liberation war. In using the experience of the Popular Front, Communists strove to activise the struggle against fascism, to broaden the mass basis of the Resistance, and organise armed actions. The line of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, which became dominant

¹ R. Aron, *Histoire de la libération de la France, Juin 1944—Mai 1945*, Paris, 1959, p. 70.

² A. Werth, *France. 1940-1955*, London, 1956, p. 150.

³ *Communism in Western Europe*, New York, 1951, p. 75.

in the anti-fascist Resistance movement, guaranteed the leading position of the proletariat and the involvement of broad masses in deciding the problems of war and peace. The Italian General Raffaele Cadorna, admitting that the Italian Communist Party was the leading force in the Resistance, explained this as follows: "The Communists are the only party which conduct a fully armed war, have a well-equipped rear, organising centres, factories, printing works, and able and reliable communications. The Communists are the most resolute in waging the battle against the Germans and the fascists: they unswervingly oppose any agreements or compromises with the enemy."¹

The majority of social democratic parties took part in the Resistance. The cooperation of Communists and Social Democrats proved that such experience had a positive influence on the performance of these workers' parties, and considerably enhanced the role of the working class in the political development of society.

Nevertheless, there was less unity and activity within the social democratic parties as compared to the communist. In admitting this Daniel Mayer regards this as an example of their higher type of democracy. However, these assertions have nothing in common with the realities of the anti-fascist Resistance.

The limited participation by the social democratic parties in the Resistance movement was obviously linked with the political stance of the social democratic leadership. Thus, a certain confusion occurring among the Social Democrats in the early days of the Resistance, was not because they were particularly democratic, but due to the collapse of their former political line. Dealing with the change in the attitude of the Socialist Party (SFIO) to one of support of the Resistance Professor E.D. Godfrey commented: "Most important, however, were thousands of Party rank-and-filers all over France who, unlike the Parliamentarians, had not been so abruptly brought face to face with their consciences in July 1940, had outlived the hysteria of the first Petain summer, and were in a better position to make decisions consonant with their political ideology than their national leaders."² In other words, the fidelity of the rank-and-file Socialists to socialist ideas and aims spurred them to support the anti-fascist struggle, whereas the previous political line of the Socialist Party's leadership hampered this.

Actually, in the early days, the social democratic leaders not so much guided the masses to become active anti-fascist Resistance fighters as followed in their wake. Though later on the drive of the masses in the anti-fascist struggle was reckoned with more fully by

¹ R. Cadorna, *La Riscossa*, Milan, 1948, p. 181.

² E. D. Godfrey, *The Fate of the French Non-Communist Left*, New York, 1955, p. 37.

the social democratic leaders, they retained many elements in their policy that handicapped the combat ability of the movement. Part of these was projecting their actions in line with the policies of the bourgeois participants in the Resistance and of the American and British governments.

A comparison of the contribution made by the communist and the social democratic parties to the anti-fascist struggle highlights the historic nature of the division within the working-class movement. While the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union and the failure of the social democratic leaders to achieve this by reformist methods underlines the fact that only the revolutionary trend is able to give society the perspective of socialist development, the experience of the anti-fascist struggle tore to shreds their second argument, justifying their hostility to the revolutionary trend on the grounds of their concern for the "defence of democracy".

During the Second World War the indisputable superiority of the revolutionary policy of the communist parties in defence of democracy, national independence, and social progress from fascist barbarism was clearly demonstrated. The leading role of Communists in the anti-fascist struggle showed, too, the superiority of communist ideological principles. Their enormous energy, their unity and heroism, and the unprecedented growth of their influence gave proof of the correctness of the line of the communist movement. Communists always explained that the most reliable defence of democracy was through a powerful mass movement which united the working class and all democratic forces. Bourgeois and social democratic critics branded this view as presenting a danger to democratic freedom. Actually, the creation of the anti-fascist Resistance signified the victory of the Communist approach to the democratic struggle.

In capitalist countries Communists were subjected to persecution because they supported the Soviet Union. Some social democratic leaders not only accused the Communists of being unpatriotic, but also supported the slander that the Communists considered a new world war to be essential. They asserted that the foreign policy line of the Labour and Socialist International represented true "proletarian internationalism." However, the Second World War destroyed all illusions, and made it necessary to make a clear choice between the opposing camps. It became obvious that the foreign policy of the social democratic leaders prior to the war was subordinated to the policy of their own bourgeois leaders.

On the contrary, the decisive role of the Soviet Union in the anti-fascist liberation war showed the historical truth of the policy of the communist movement and encouraged the anti-fascists to join in support of the Soviet Union in the interests of the international proletariat and worldwide social progress.

It is impossible to overestimate *the ideological results of the political experience accumulated by the broad masses of the population in the grim years of the struggle against fascism.*

The prestige of bourgeois ideology was still more undermined by the emergence of fascism. The slogans of "Freedom, Equality and Fraternity" which emblazoned the banners of the bourgeois revolution always contradicted the spirit of bourgeois individualism and free enterprise which gave birth to the beast-of-prey principle of fascism, *homo homini lupus est*. Fascism wiped away this inconsistency in bourgeois ideology by trampling on its humanist traditions. Bourgeois individualism, without the restraint of humanist ideals, degenerated into egocentrism, and this became the most important component of fascist ideology—doctrines of hatred of man which threatened the very foundations of civilisation. Fascist ideology was not confronted with effective opposition from other bourgeois ideological trends. The first military victories of fascist Germany in Europe were largely due to the fact that the class egotism of a considerable section of the ruling circles in bourgeois countries nurtured their anti-patriotic feelings even when under fascist attack.

In the prevailing circumstances the ideology of Soviet society became the fundamental support of the ideological gains of mankind and civilisation. Bernard Shaw with keen insight wrote: "Lenin's significance is such that should his attempt to introduce Socialism fail, then our present civilisation will go under."¹ Indeed, during the war the peoples of the world looked to the Soviet Union which saved them from fascism. The Commander of the Armed Forces of the USA in the Far East General McArthur did not exaggerate when he said in February 1942, "The hopes of civilisation rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Russian Army."² The fact that the Soviet Union justified these hopes, immeasurably raised the moral and political prestige of the socialist country.

It was during the war years that Soviet democracy came to be widely regarded as a higher type of democracy. In 1942, G.D.H. Cole wrote: "Fundamentally, the Soviet system is much more democratic than any parliamentary system I know of."³ He considered the chief advantage of the Soviet system to be the achievement of genuine equality which, guaranteeing the qualitative widening of democracy, helped to encourage the development of active democracy. "Soviet democracy, as it has just shown by its rally in face of the Nazi menace, passes this test of activity."⁴ Noting that the concept and practice of the Soviets had considerably influenced the anti-fascist

¹ *International Literature*, 1939, No. 1, p. 72.

² F. Schuman, *Soviet Politics. At Home and Abroad*, New York, 1947, p. 432.

³ G. D. H. Cole, *Great Britain in the Post-War World*, London, 1942, p. 112.

⁴ G. D. H. Cole, *Europe, Russia and the Future*, New York, 1942, p. 217.

Resistance movement he emphasised that "the Social Democrats cannot bring about revolutions in Europe, or hold them to Socialist courses, without invoking the instruments of Sovietism. ...Soviets will be, over all Nazi-occupied Europe, indispensable instruments of the coming revolution."¹ Such assertions were not accidental. The Popular and National Liberation Fronts which emerged during the war were undoubtedly guided by the tradition of the Soviets, and these movements were not limited to the war against fascism, but organised the masses for political struggle to bring about the democratic and socialist transformation of society.

The Great Patriotic War demonstrated with undeniable force the ideological superiority of the new civilisation. The whole world expressed its admiration for the spiritual greatness of a people who had displayed unprecedented mass heroism in man's history, both at the front and in the rear. The American General Joseph W. Stilwell wrote in 1945 that the whole civilised world should hail the Russian soldier "as the central figure in the struggle".²

The efforts of reactionary bourgeois writers to explain the heroism of the Soviet people as "chauvinist pride" and even due to "pan-slavism"³ do not bear criticism. Only a genuinely free nation who has imbibed all the spiritual richness of humankind could be capable of such heroism. As the authors of *Histoire Générale du Socialisme* quite correctly emphasised, it was precisely the basic socialist roots of Soviet society which were the main source of its strength⁴.

History proved that socialist ideology which inspired working people to struggle for their freedom is in itself a gigantic step forward in the ideological development of people. Summing up the ideological confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie, E.H. Carr wrote: "The serious thing about the contemporary revolution is...that it [Marxism] has undermined the self-confidence of the privileged by sapping their own faith in the sincerity and efficacy of the principles on which their moral authority rested."⁵ The progressive left tendencies in the widest spectrum of ideological trends have noticeably strengthened, including even some religious. The winning by the working class of new bridgeheads in the ideological struggle has been the direct consequence of its leading role in the struggle against fascism.

Thus, by starting the anti-fascist struggle, the working class, as represented in the first place by the socialist state, not only

¹ Ibid., p. 220.

² *Daily Worker*, June 1, 1945, p. 2.

³ A. Mazour, *Russia Past and Present*, Toronto—London—New York, 1952, p. 643.

⁴ Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 67.

⁵ E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, p. 95.

played the decisive role in the defeat of fascism, but assisted in the hastening of social progress. The popular democratic and socialist revolutions in the countries of Central and South-East Europe, the profound social and democratic transformations in a considerable part of the globe, the upsurge of the national liberation movement, all were the direct results of the leadership of the working class in the anti-fascist liberation struggle. The leading role of the working class in defence of civilisation is the sound basis for its future victories.

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